



GIARDIASIS

CRUDE DATA	
Number of Cases	313
Annual Incidence ^a	
LA County	3.27
United States	7.10
Age at Diagnosis	
Mean	32
Median	34
Range	<1–89 years
Case Fatality	
LA County	0.0%
United States	N/A

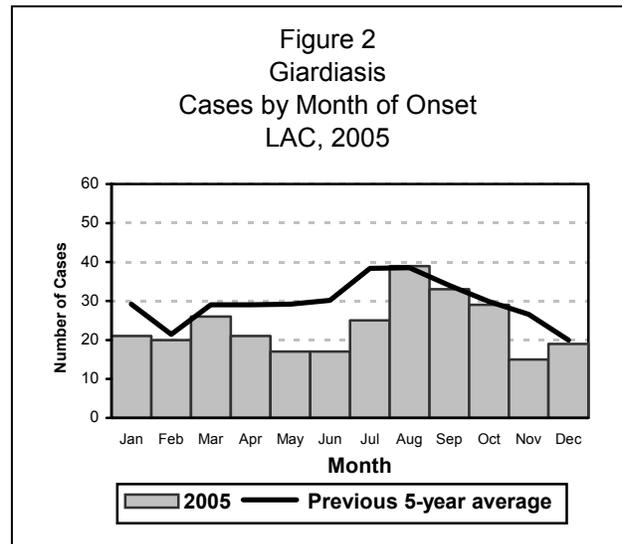
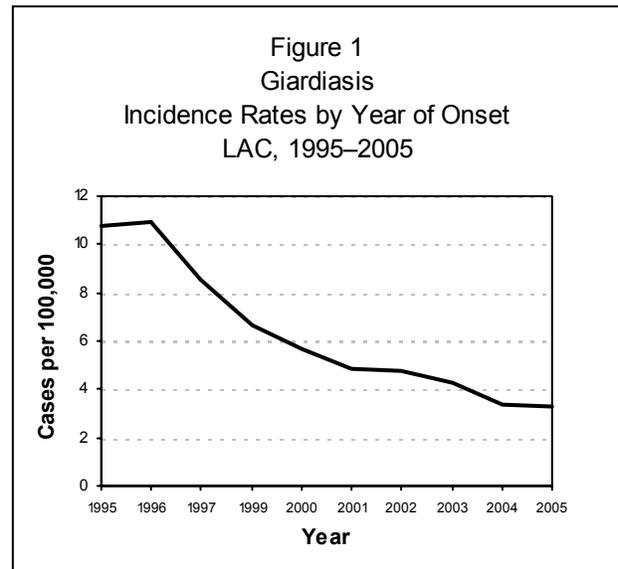
^a Cases per 100,000 population.

DESCRIPTION

Giardiasis is an intestinal infection caused by the zoonotic protozoan parasite *Giardia intestinalis* (previously *G. lamblia*). *Giardia* cysts shed in animal or human feces may contaminate food or drinking water or be transferred on hands or fomites; recreational waters such as lakes and pools may also serve as vehicles of transmission. Incubation can range from 3–25 days or longer, but the median incubation time is 7–10 days. While usually asymptomatic, symptoms can include sulfurous burps, chronic diarrhea, frequent loose and pale greasy stools, bloating, cramps, fatigue, and weight loss. Complications are rare, but may include malabsorption of fats and fat-soluble vitamins. Children in day care represent a reservoir of disease in developed countries. There is no vaccine.

DISEASE ABSTRACT

- The incidence of *Giardia* in LAC has dropped annually over the past 10 years, and has reached an all-time low in 2005.
- Incidence tends to increase during summer months when high-risk activities such as recreational water exposure also increase.





STRATIFIED DATA

Trends: Giardiasis incidence in LAC and has reached an all-time low during 2005; the number of cases reported decreased more than 70% over the past 10 years (1,161 cases reported in 1994, Figure 1). In fact, 2005 Giardiasis incidence in LAC is the lowest reported in the last 20 years.

Seasonality: The number of cases typically increases during summer months when recreational exposure is more likely (i.e., swimming in infected pools, lakes, etc.) (Figure 2).

Age: As in previous years, the highest age-specific incidence rate occurred among children aged 1–4 years (6.4 cases per 100,000); the 5–14 age group and the 35–44 age group followed with an incidence of about 3.8 cases per 100,000 each (Figure 3).

Sex: Males continue to be more likely to contract *Giardia* than females (1.4:1).

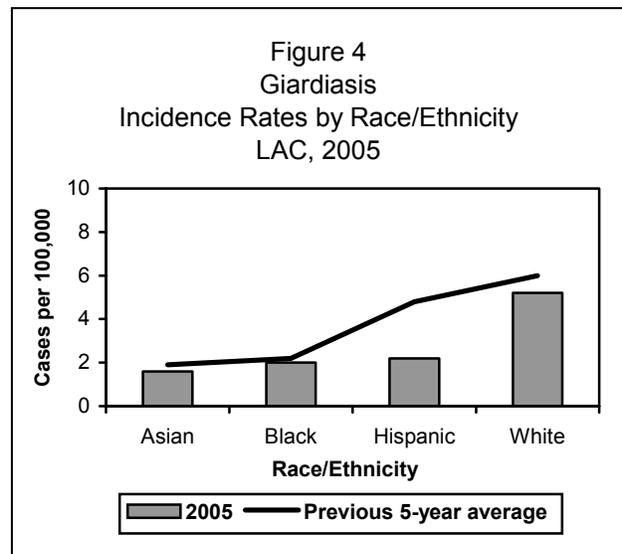
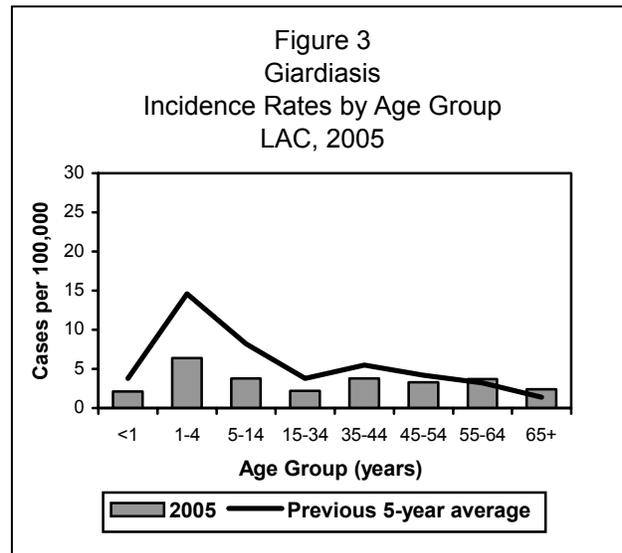
Race/Ethnicity: Whites continue to have higher race/ethnicity specific incidence rates than other races. Compared to the previous five-year average, the incidence for Hispanics has decreased 37% and the incidence for Blacks has decreased 5% (Figure 4); Hispanics continue to have a higher race/ethnicity specific incidence rate than Blacks. The race/ethnicity specific incidence rate for Asians decreased (9%) compared to previous years.

Location: Of the eight SPAs across LAC, three had rates that were higher than the overall county mean rate for this disease: SPA 2, San Fernando area (4.9 per 100,000); SPA 4 Metro area (3.9 per 100,000); and SPA 5 West (5.2 per 100,000). The rate in SPA 1 Antelope Valley dropped substantially from 3.9 to 0.9 cases per 100,000 population.

COMMENTS

There has been a considerable decline in incidence of *Giardia* over the past decade. While the specific reasons for this decrease are unknown, several factors may have contributed including advances in food and water safety as well as improved education about safety regarding recreational water (i.e., avoiding drinking lake and pool water, keeping babies in diapers and individuals with diarrhea from swimming in public facilities).

There was one outbreak reported in 2005, where 10 women became ill sharing a common water source at a gym. Please see 2005 special report for more details.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CDC. Giardiasis Surveillance—United States, 1992–1997. MMWR 2000; 49(SS07); 1–13. Available at: www.cdc.gov/epo/mwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4907a1.htm

CDC. Parasitic Disease Information Fact Sheet—Giardiasis. Available at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasities/giardiasis/factsht_giardia.htm

CDC. Surveillance for Waterborne Disease Outbreaks—United States, 1997–1998. MMWR 2000; 49(SS04); 1–35. Available at: www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/review/mmwrhtml/ss4904a1.htm

Map 6. Giardiasis Rates by Health District, Los Angeles County, 2005*

