



An Overview on Intestinal Parasites: Its Symptoms and Treatment

Farah Saffary*

Department of Medicine, University of Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany

DESCRIPTION

Intestinal parasites are organisms that live in the digestive tract of humans and animals. These parasites can cause a wide range of symptoms, from mild discomfort to severe illness. Intestinal parasites are common in many parts of the world, especially in areas with poor sanitation and hygiene.

Types of intestinal parasites

Protozoa: These are single-celled organisms that can cause diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Common types of protozoa that can infect the human digestive system include *Giardia lamblia*, *Entamoeba histolytica*, and *Cryptosporidium parvum*.

Helminths: These are multicellular organisms that can range in size from microscopic to several meters long. Common types of helminths that can infect the human digestive system include roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms.

Ectoparasites: These are parasites that live on the outside of the body, such as lice and fleas. While they do not typically infect the digestive system, they can cause skin irritation and other health problems.

Symptoms of intestinal parasites

The symptoms of intestinal parasites can vary depending on the type of parasite and the severity of the infection. Some common symptoms include:

Diarrhea: This is one of the most common symptoms of intestinal parasites. Diarrhea caused by parasites can range from mild to severe and can last for several days or even weeks.

Abdominal pain: Parasitic infections can cause cramping and pain in the abdominal area.

Nausea and vomiting: Some parasites can cause nausea and vomiting, especially if the infection is severe.

Fatigue: Intestinal parasites can cause fatigue and weakness, especially if the infection has been on-going for some time.

Weight loss: Chronic parasitic infections can lead to weight loss and malnutrition.

Anemia: Some parasites, such as hookworms, can cause anemia by feeding on blood in the intestinal lining.

Treatment of intestinal parasites

The treatment of intestinal parasites typically involves a combination of medications and lifestyle changes. Some common treatment options include:

Antiparasitic medications: These medications are designed to kill or eliminate the parasites from the body. Common antiparasitic medications include albendazole, mebendazole, and metronidazole.

Probiotics: Probiotics can help restore the natural balance of bacteria in the gut, which can be disrupted by a parasitic infection.

Improved hygiene: Practicing good hygiene, such as washing hands regularly and avoiding contact with contaminated water, can help prevent parasitic infections.

Proper sanitation: Proper sanitation, such as the use of clean water and proper sewage disposal, can also help prevent parasitic infections.

Preventing intestinal parasites involves taking steps to reduce the risk of infection. Some common prevention strategies include:

1. Washing hands regularly with soap and water can help prevent the spread of parasites.
2. Cooking food to the appropriate temperature can help kill any parasites that may be present.
3. Avoid drinking or bathing in contaminated water, especially in areas where sanitation is poor.
4. Regularly bathing and grooming pets can help prevent the spread of parasites.

Correspondence to: Farah Saffary, Department of Medicine, University of Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany, E-mail: saffary_farah@hamburg.de

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Global collaboration and coordination are essential in addressing the issue of intestinal parasites. Efforts should focus not only on treatment and control but also on preventive measures and sustainable interventions. This includes investing

in infrastructure development, improving access to healthcare, and promoting behavior change at both individual and community levels.