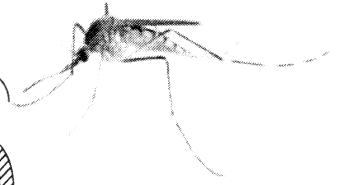


PARASITES



Parasites are living organisms that derive nutrients from other organisms, often causing harm in the process. Think of a tick and a dog, or a mosquito biting a human.

Two serious illnesses/diseases are caused by parasites — malaria and amebic dysentery. Malaria is caused by certain protozoa, which are passed to humans through the bites of mosquitoes. Amebic dysentery is caused by a microscopic parasite called *Entamoeba histolytica*. The disease, in which the patient has nausea and diarrhea, can be contracted from contaminated food or water or from direct contact with an infected person. Because parasites are living organisms, they can generally move on their own. Once they are done feeding on one host (perhaps because that host has died) they move to the next.

Besides the obvious - avoiding direct contact with an infected person or contaminated items - there are some effective weapons for keeping parasitic diseases out of range.

Water Guns

- Don't drink water or use ice made from lakes, rivers, springs, streams or poorly monitored or maintained wells
- Avoid swallowing recreational water in swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, spas and fountains
- Do not swim if you are infected or are experiencing diarrhea to protect others
- Pay attention to public health department water advisories and do not drink untreated tap water during community-wide outbreaks of disease
- Heat water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute or use a NSF-rated filter that has an absolute pore size of 1 micron or smaller if water potability is uncertain

Food Fighters

- Use uncontaminated water to wash all food that is to be eaten raw, or peel them
- Avoid drinking unpasteurized milk or dairy products
- Avoid eating food from street vendors
- Cook beef, lamb, veal roasts and steaks to 145degF, pork, ground meat, and wild game to 160degF, and poultry to 180degF in the thigh (can also freeze meat for a few weeks)
- Do not taste meat until it is fully cooked

Body Blockers

- Wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water especially after using the toilet, before handling or eating food and before and after every diaper change
- Wear gloves when doing gardening or working in soil and sand
- Keep fingernails clean and short and avoid biting nails
- Avoid scratching the skin in the anal area

