



Amoebic Dysentery

What is Amoebic Dysentery?

- Amoebic dysentery is a diarrhoeal disease
- It is caused by the **parasite** *Entamoeba histolytica*.
- In 90% of infection cases, there are no symptoms.
- If symptoms occur, it appears within 3 days to 3 months after infection.
- Typical symptoms:
 - ✓ bloody diarrhoea
 - ✓ abdominal tenderness
 - ✓ nausea
 - ✓ weight loss.
- Life-threatening complications:
 - ✓ intestinal perforation
 - ✓ spreading to liver or other organs.

How is Amoebic Dysentery transmitted?

- Via the **faecal-oral route**, comprising of excretion by the infected individual and subsequent drinking of infected water or consumption of infected food.
- Person-to-person** spread under unhygienic conditions.
- Eating of raw fruit or vegetables, which have been irrigated with contaminated water.
- Outside the human body, the organism remains viable in a cyst in moist soil for long periods.

How can Amoebic Dysentery patients be treated?

- Anti-parasitic medication for symptom treatment.
- Surgical intervention may be necessary where complications occurred.

How can Amoebic Dysentery be prevented?

- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables with uncontaminated fresh water before consumption.
- Practice strict hygienic principles after using the toilet and before preparing the food.
- Do not drink contaminated water.
- Disinfect water with 1 teaspoon of domestic bleach to 20 litres of water and wait for 1 hour before drinking. Cloudy water can be disinfected with 2 to 4 teaspoons of domestic bleach.

Reference: DWAF (2003). Management of water-related microbial diseases, Vol. 1.

