



Six years of diarrhea in a 12 year old? There is no excuse for this. We can help kids like this with your assistance. We can help them in the United States, and around the world.  
-Ken

News Sports Entertainment Living Obituaries G...

Archive Search!

Web Search powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH**

**ARCHIVES**

Print this story | Email this story | Last modified: **Monday, November 17, 2008 12:51 A...**



CASEY CAMPBELL | Gazette-Times  
Laurie Childers and her 12-year-old son, Jordan Selker, talk about Jordan's experiences with the parasite blastocystis hominis and the treatments he has gone through to try and control the condition.

## Has tiny parasite invaded from Mideast wars?

By **THERESA HOGUE**  
Gazette-Times reporter

*Local researcher says health officials resist findings*

Parasites. Say the word, and conversation usually stops. It's not something that 12-year-old Jordan Selker is eager to talk about, although he knows about it from painful experience. And after years of watching him suffering with intestinal problems, general lethargy and depression, Selker's mom, Laurie Childers, was desperate to know what was wrong with her son.

She experimented with food changes to see if his ailments were caused by food allergies. She tried homeopathic cures using natural products. It was a stroke of luck that may have provided the answer: Her neighbor's husband is a researcher into a little-known one-cell parasite called

Blastocystis hominis.

Located within the intestinal walls, the parasite sheds from the feces of an infected host. Improper post-toilet hygiene is a common way the infection is spread via oral-fecal contact. And the researcher, Ken Boorum, thinks the tiny parasite may be responsible for a distinct, persistent gastro-intestinal ailment.

Boorum has spent years researching Blastocystis hominis. He is the founder of the Blastocystis Research Foundation in Corvallis and has joined researchers from Oregon State University and the United States Air Force Medical Center to investigate the parasite. They've confirmed nine cases of blastocystis infection in the Corvallis area out of 21 patients who complained of similar intestinal issues as well as pain, rashes and fatigue.

This particular form of blastocystis didn't really appear on the scene in the United States until the 1990s — about the time that Gulf War veterans began coming home complaining of a recurring gastro-intestinal illness. Frequent world travelers to Mexico and South America also have brought back the parasite.

Boorum has continuously met with resistance from the Oregon Department of Human Services as well as national agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control.

The state sent the state public health veterinarian, Dr. Emilio deBess, to testify in front of the legislative Health Policy Committee in Salem in 2007, after Rep. Sarah Gelsler introduced a house bill that would have made blastocystis a reportable disease by the Department of Human Services. DeBess dismissed claims that there was direct evidence the parasite caused disease.

But despite local lack of interest, Boorum has been in contact with researchers across the world, including military researchers with the Air Force, because many blastocystis infections appear to be directly related to service overseas. Right now, researchers are working on developing both a blood test for the parasite, as well as adequate treatment.

"The tough thing for us is treating it," Boorum said. "For many patients, there is not a cure."

Even preventing the disease is problematic, he said, warning that well water is more prone to contain blastocystis. He urges people who rely on wells for their drinking water to install a filter that is certified to remove protozoal cysts such as Cryptosporidium and Giardia.

Boorum would like to see a vaccine developed to combat the parasite. He said one possibility is that Americans are more susceptible to the parasite now than they would have been 50 years ago because they are less exposed to infection, and thus don't have the chance to build up immunities to infection.

When Laurie Childers had Jordan tested for blastocystis, the test proved positive. At that point, it wasn't easy to figure out a treatment approach, as traditional courses of antibiotics aren't always effective. Also, Childers had always avoided giving her children any antibiotics.

A combination of sulfa drugs and acupuncture treatments has reduced Jordan's pain and intestinal symptoms.

"I'm better," Jordan said. "But I wouldn't say perfect."

For more information, see [www.bhomcenter.org/](http://www.bhomcenter.org/)



### GT Reader Comments

The comments below are from readers of [gazettetimes.com](http://gazettetimes.com) and in no way represent the views of the Gazette Times or Lee Enterprises.

**adill** wrote on Nov 18, 2008 9:31 AM:

" It seems that when these "Health Officials" resist research findings they are changing the lives of families who would give just about anything for some help.

My family appeared on Primetime Live-Medical Mysteries for their morgellons segment. The funny thing is that in the beginning when I was taking the children to numerous specialist for their stomach issues and fatigue we all tested positive for blastocystis homonis. Doctors at that point treated us with one round of Flagyl and insisted that their was no point for any further treatment because most research shows nothing significant . Now several years later we are all still dealing with the same symptoms while trying to cope with daily routines that are minimal compared to what we were used to enjoying.

What does it take to get physicians to actually look at new developments in research? If our country is hit with any form of bioterrorism how long will physicians debate wether it is real or not. "

\*Member ID:

\*Password:

Remember login?  
(requires cookies)

Login

**You must be logged  
in to comment.**



It's free and quick!

**University Honda**  
752-2150 • 1-800-533-6517  
[www.uhonda.com](http://www.uhonda.com)

**InBusiness** MID-VALLEY  
BUSINESS NEWS FOR THE  
WILLAMETTE VALLEY

