Trichinosis

Agent: Roundworms of genus *Trichinella; T. spiralis* is the most common cause of human infections.
Mode of Transmission: Eating raw or undercooked contaminated meat, including bear, pork, wild feline (such as cougar), fox, dog, wolf, horse, seal, or walrus. Trichinosis is not transmitted from person to person.
Signs/Symptoms: Usually occur in 1-2 days after consuming contaminated meat and may include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, fever, and abdominal discomfort. Headaches, fever, chills, cough, eye swelling, aching joints and muscle pains, itchy skin, diarrhea, or constipation may follow. Individuals may be asymptomatic, but severe or even fatal infections can occur.
Prevention: All meat should be cooked to safe temperatures and a meat thermometer should be used to measure the internal temperature of cooked meat. Whole cuts of meat (excluding poultry and wild game) should be cooked to at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit. Ground meat (excluding poultry) and wild game (both whole cuts and ground) should be cooked to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit. All poultry products should be cooked to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Meat grinders should be cleaned thoroughly after each use.
Other Important Information: Trichinosis used to be more common in the United States, but has decreased dramatically in the past forty years. Consumption of raw or undercooked pork products was the most common risk factor. Now, more cases in the United States are associated with consuming raw or undercooked wild game meats than with pork products. Curing, drying, smoking or microwaving meat alone does not always kill infective worms. Homemade jerky and sausage have reportedly been the cause of many cases in recent years.

No cases of trichinosis were reported in Virginia in 2015. One case was reported in 2014. The five-year average for trichinosis in Virginia is 1.4 cases per year.