

Trichinosis

Agent: Roundworms of genus *Trichinella*; *T. spiralis* is the most common cause of human infections.

Mode of Transmission: Eating undercooked contaminated meat, including bear, pork, wild feline (such as cougar), fox, dog, wolf, horse, seal, or walrus.

Signs/Symptoms: Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, fever, and abdominal discomfort. Headaches, fevers, 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 pork products and meat from wild animals should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

Other Important Information: Trichinosis used to be more common in the United States and was more often associated with consumption of raw or undercooked pork products. Now, more cases in the United States are associated with consuming raw or undercooked wild game meats than with pork products. Trichinosis is not transmitted from person to person. Infected meat will remain infective until it has been properly cooked, cured, frozen or irradiated.

No cases of trichinosis were reported in Virginia during 2010. The last reported case in Virginia occurred in 2008 in an adult male with a recent history of consuming undercooked meat products, including wild elk.