

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.

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: Cook all whole cuts of pork and meat from wild animals to an internal temperature of at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit and all ground meat from pork and wild game to an internal temperature of 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.

Two cases of trichinosis were reported in 2011. One occurred in a school-aged male from the northern region and the other was in an adult male from the southwest region. While both cases provided food histories, no particular risk factor for illness was identified in either case. Prior to 2011, the last reported case in Virginia occurred in 2008 in an adult male who had consumed undercooked meat products, including wild elk.