

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: 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, 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. Infected meat will remain infective until it has been properly cooked, cured, frozen or irradiated.

Two cases of trichinosis were reported in 2012. This is the same as the number of cases reported in 2011, but higher than the five-year average of 0.6 cases per year. Both cases occurred in persons in the 30-39 year age group from the northern region. Both reported eating undercooked pork prior to illness onset.