

TRICHINELLOSIS

(Trichinosis)



Trichinellosis (trichinosis) is a foodborne illness caused by parasitic worms called *Trichinella*. People get this disease by eating undercooked or raw meat from an infected animal, most commonly bear and wild pigs. The disease can be very severe or even fatal, but it is easily prevented.

What causes it?



- ▶ Tiny *Trichinella* worms live in the muscles of infected animals (including bears, pigs, wild boar, deer, cattle, horses, and many more).
- ▶ When a person eats undercooked meat, the worms stay alive, hatch inside the stomach, grow, and produce more worms.
- ▶ These worms then travel through the body and settle in the muscles, where they can live for long periods of time.

What are the signs and symptoms?



Intestinal phase (1 to 2 days after infection)

- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Abdominal pain
- ▶ Diarrhea

Muscular phase (often within 2 weeks of infection)

- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Chills
- ▶ Muscle pain
- ▶ Swelling of the face and eyes
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Cough

What are the treatment options?



- ▶ Trichinellosis can be diagnosed with a blood test or muscle biopsy.
- ▶ Anti-parasitic drugs and steroids are used to treat trichinellosis.

How can it be prevented?



- ▶ Cook all meats, especially wild game, to an internal temperature of at least 160°F. Use a meat thermometer to check the temperature.
- ▶ Do not rely on freezing to kill infective larvae. Some species of *Trichinella* do not die when frozen.
- ▶ Microwaving, curing (salting), smoking, or drying meat alone does not reliably kill *Trichinella*.
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after handling raw meat.
- ▶ Wash all materials that come in contact with raw meat thoroughly with soap and warm water after use.

