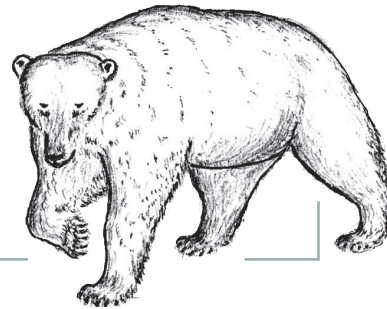


# Trichinosis



## Why should we be concerned?

- ➔ Trichinosis is a disease that is caused by a worm. Most of the time, animals that have this worm look healthy. Sometimes the worms are too small to see.
- ➔ Sometimes, but not always, animals infected with the worm show the following when they are being butchered:
  - Small lumps or sacs (called "cysts") in the muscles of the jaw, tongue, or diaphragm (the large muscle below the lungs)
  - Swollen intestines with small bruises
- ➔ People can get trichinosis from eating raw, fermented (igunaq) or undercooked meat that has the worm. The worm is what causes sickness in humans.
- ➔ Trichinosis has been found in walrus and polar bear. The majority of polar bears carry the trichinella worm.



## What are the signs of trichinosis in people?

- Sickness can start a few days after eating the infected meat. The first signs of trichinosis are vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, fever and pain in the stomach.
- More signs can show up 8-15 days later. People can have headaches, fever, chills, coughing, eye swelling, aching joints, muscle pain, diarrhea or constipation, and itchy skin.
- Trichinosis can be treated with medicine. If it is not treated, more serious infections can cause problems with the heart and lungs, and problems with body movements. If trichinosis is not treated it can cause death.



## What can we do to keep safe from trichinosis?

- ✓ Get walrus tongues tested before eating the meat raw. This is the best way to keep safe from trichinosis. The Government of Nunavut has a free program to test walrus tongues. Contact your HTO or Health Center to find out more.
- ✓ If you don't get the tongue tested, cook the walrus before eating it. Cook the meat until it is grey/brown in colour and the juices are clear (to an internal temperature hotter than 75°C). Trichinosis is not killed by aging, freezing or drying. It is only killed by cooking.
- ✓ Eat polar bear meat well cooked.

