

Fact Sheet

Trichinosis

What causes trichinosis (the worm disease)?

A tiny roundworm called *Trichinella* causes humans to get sick. This worm can infect walrus, polar bears, foxes and dogs. Humans can be infected by eating uncooked meat from an infected animal.

What are the symptoms?

If you have eaten infected meat you can start feeling sick between 3 to 21 days later. The worms go from your gut into your blood and then into the muscles causing: stomach and muscle pain, diarrhea, sweating and weakness, fever, rash, and swollen eyelids.

What is the treatment for it?

You will likely be treated with medicine for 10 days by your healthcare provider to kill the worms. If untreated, trichinosis can cause serious illness and even death.

Should I stop eating meat raw?

No. Eating country meat raw is very good for you. Just get the meat tested before eating. Freezing or fermenting does not kill the worms. If you would like to eat the meat right away it must be cooked well so you don't get sick.

How can I tell if raw meat is safe to eat?

There is a test to see if the worms or their eggs (cysts) are in the meat. Infected animals do not act like they are sick and the worms are too small to see.

How do I test meat?

The test is free. Take a meat sample (tongue) to your health center or Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO).

What do I do with infected meat?

Do not eat infected meat or feed it to animals as they can also get sick. Ask your HTO, Conservation Officer or Environmental Health Officer how to best to throw away infected meat.