

NORTHERN INTER-TRIBAL HEALTH AUTHORITY INC.



TRICHINELLOSIS

Trichinellosis is a disease caused by a worm/larvae (eggs) called Trichenella. Trichenella causes muscle soreness, fever, eyelid swelling, pain, sweating, chills, weakness, and diarrhea. If the infection is heavy, patients may experience difficulty coordinating movements, and have heart and breathing problems. These symptoms may be mild or severe. Trichenella may cause death.

Anyone can get Trichinellosis. Trichenella worms are most often found in pork, bear and cougar meat but can be in other foods too. The worms/larvae cannot be seen.

Persons who are infected do not transfer the worm to other humans. The human must eat the worms in their food to become sick.

Most people will show signs or have symptoms 8 – 15 days after consuming the contaminated meat. For mild or moderate infections, most symptoms subside within a few months.

You can get Trichinellosis:

- If you eat raw or undercooked foods such as pork, bear, moose, fox, wolf, wild boars or cougar.

- If you attempt to dry infected meat. Dried meat is not cooked. The Trichenella worm must be killed by heat/cooking to be safe to eat.

To Prevent the infection:

- Curing (salting), drying, smoking, or microwaving meat does not consistently kill infective worms.
- Eat only well-cooked pork, bear or cougar meats. Cook all meats to at least 165° F (74° C).
- Keep raw foods away from cooked foods by washing cutting boards, utensils, and hands, and not reusing packages.

If you think you may have Trichinellosis:

If you have eaten undercooked meat, particularly bear meat or pork, you should tell your health nurse or doctor.

How is trichinosis treated?

Medicines are available to treat trichinosis. Treatment should begin as soon as possible and the decision to treat is based upon symptoms, exposure to undercooked meat, and blood tests.