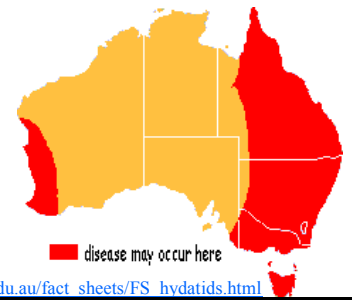


Zoonoses Fact Sheet - Hydatids



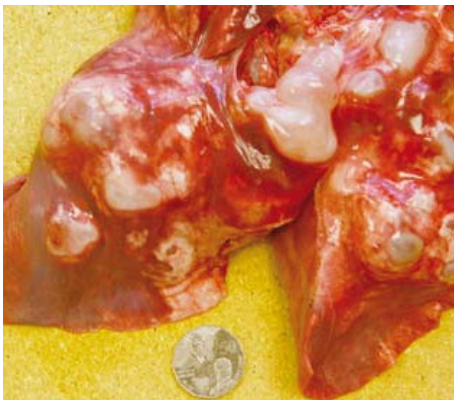
Hydatid tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus*

Hydatid tapeworm lives in the gut of dogs, dingoes and foxes. The worms don't affect the dogs, but the eggs are very infective for people, sheep and kangaroos. They can make a cyst in people which, if it bursts, is life threatening. Though it is usually a disease of south-eastern Australia, there have been human cases in central Australia.



iceh.uws.edu.au/fact_sheets/FS_hydatids.html

What sickness can it cause in humans and how is it picked up?



Cysts in a cow's lung.
Photo courtesy of David Jenkins

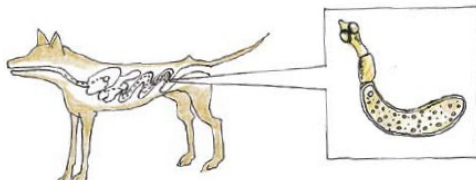
Hydatids can kill people.

The egg of the hydatid tapeworm is passed into the environment from the dog's gut with its faeces. From there it can get into the ground, water supply, and vegetation. The eggs are sticky and will stick to the dog's coat. In cool, damp conditions, the eggs survive for months.



If these eggs get into a person's mouth, they can be swallowed. The eggs hatch inside the person, and the larva then travels through the person's body and forms a cyst (see photo at left). This can be anywhere, such as the liver, lungs, bone, or even brain. The cyst grows slowly, over years, and can get very big. It can make people feel sick because it pushes on their insides. If the cyst leaks or bursts, it can kill people.

How are Dogs involved?



Adult hydatid tapeworms can only live inside dogs, dingoes and foxes.

Dogs can become infected from eating kangaroos or sheep carcasses, then bringing the eggs into the home environment through their poos.

How do we prevent them?



Images courtesy of Glenn Campbell, Bayer and Durox

Dogs can only get the hydatid tapeworm from eating cysts in the lungs or liver (offal) of infected sheep, kangaroos, cattle, or pigs. People, and sheep and kangaroos, can only get the cysts from dogs. Breaking the links between these two groups is the key to preventing this disease.

Stopping people getting infected:

- Wash hands after playing with dogs, being outside, cleaning the yard, and before cooking or eating.
- Keep the yard clean of dog faeces.
- Don't let dogs get into areas where food is grown or children play

Stopping dogs getting infected:

- Worm dogs every 6 weeks with an Allwormer containing Praziquantel, like Droncit, Popantel, or Exelpet Allwormer. The store can get these in.
- Don't feed dogs offal unless it's thoroughly cooked.
- Make sure raw offal is burnt or buried deeply.
- Don't let dogs stray, attack stock, or eat from carcasses