

Zoonoses Fact Sheet: Hydatid tapeworm (*Echinococcus granulosus*)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>What are Hydatids?</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydatid tapeworm lives in the gut of dogs, dingoes and foxes. The worms don't affect the dogs, but the eggs can make people, sheep and kangaroos very sick. They can make a cyst in people which, if its bursts, is life threatening. Though it is usually a disease of south-eastern Australia, there have been human cases in central Australia.  <p style="text-align: right;">www.iceh.uws.edu.au/fact_sheets/FS_hydatids.html</p> | | |
| <p>What sickness does it cause in humans and how is it picked up?</p>  <p>Photo: David Jenkins</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (and be passed onto humans through contact contaminated ground or water) The eggs are sticky and will stick to the dog's coat. In cool, damp conditions, the eggs survive for months. If hydatid 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 forming a cyst (see photo at left) in places 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.  | | |
| <p>How are dogs involved?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.  | | |
| <p>How do we prevent them?</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Stopping people getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Stopping dogs getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worm dogs every 6 weeks with an All-wormer (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 </td> </tr> </table> | <p>Stopping people getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <p>Stopping dogs getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worm dogs every 6 weeks with an All-wormer (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 |
| <p>Stopping people getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <p>Stopping dogs getting infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worm dogs every 6 weeks with an All-wormer (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 | | |

Source: Dr Sam Phelan, Dog Health Programs in Indigenous communities, an Environmental Health Practitioner's Guide, AMRRIC. 2010

For more information please contact us on (08) 8948 1768, email us at info@amrric.org or visit the AMRRIC website www.amrric.org