

HYDATID TAPEWORM

ZOONOSES FACTSHEET

Diseases that spread from animals to people

WHAT IS IT?

Hydatid tapeworms can live in the gut of dogs, dingoes and foxes. They usually don't make the dogs sick, but can make people very sick.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Hydatid tapeworm eggs can be infective in the environment for **months**, even in **cold, damp weather**.

Dogs, dingoes and foxes spread hydatid tapeworm when they eat infected **sheep and kangaroos**.

Adult hydatid tapeworms can only live and breed in the intestines of dogs, dingoes and foxes; but they can infect lots of different animals and people.

When they infect animals such as sheep and kangaroos, they are not able to move and reproduce properly, so they get stuck in the organs i.e. they form cysts.

Cysts are commonly found in the liver and lungs of infected sheep and kangaroos. When dogs eat the cysts, the hydatid tapeworms start growing again inside of the dog, dingo or fox, so they continue to spread.

The eggs of the hydatid tapeworms are spread to the environment in the faeces of dogs, dingoes and foxes. Other animals and people can eat the eggs accidentally through environmental contamination. If the eggs get into people, cysts will form also, making them very sick.



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

In animals: Dogs do not show any clinical signs. Hydatid tapeworms are too small, they cannot be seen with our eyes.

In people: People are very sick; they can have stomach pain, diarrhoea, swollen abdomen, unexplained weight loss. Hydatid tapeworm cysts can kill people.

HOW DO YOU TREAT IT?



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3

In animals:

- Prevent dogs from eating offal from sheep and kangaroo carcasses. Do not let dogs attack sheep or kangaroos. Bury or burn any offal waste to stop dogs getting into it in bins or at the dump.
- Feed dog food only to dogs
- Use all-wormers every 3 months in adult dogs. Treat for hydatid tapeworms in prone areas every 6-8 weeks

Prevention of transmission to people:

- Practice good hygiene and wash hands with soap often
- Wear gloves to pick up dog poo and put it in the bin
- Keep yards clean and dry
- Use fences to keep dingoes and foxes out of yards

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

REFERENCES

Jenkins, D., 2011, Hydatids are Alive and Well and Living in Australia, Australian Veterinary Association Conference Proceedings, Veterinary Information Network, <https://www.vin.com/doc/?id=6087846>.
Phelan, S., 2010, Dog Health Programs in Indigenous Communities – an Environmental Health Practitioner's Guide, AMRRIC. <https://www.amrric.org/resources/ehp-manual/>.

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