

Enlarged abdomen due to hydatid cyst. (Source: ResearchGate)

Treatment for hydatidosis

- There is no treatment for hydatid cysts in grazing animals
- Condemnation of carcass with cysts
- In humans, treatment involves surgical removal of cysts

How can I prevent hydatid disease?

By breaking the tapeworm life cycle to interrupt transmission, thus preventing spread of parasites:

- Regular deworming of all dogs as advised by a veterinarian.
- Do not feed dog raw offal or carcasses.
- Proper meat inspection to condemn infected carcasses.

- Avoid eating or drinking anything that may have come into contact with dog faeces.
- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before eating them.
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently, especially before preparing food or after handling dogs.



UNDERSTANDING HYDATIDOSIS IN ANIMALS AND HUMANS



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What is hydatid disease?

Hydatid disease, also called cystic echinococcosis or hydatidosis is a zoonosis caused by a dog tapeworm's eggs. Humans get the disease when they accidentally eat or drink food and water contaminated with parasite eggs. The disease causes cysts (liquid-filled pockets) formation in internal tissues such as the liver, lungs and brain of grazing animals and people. Hydatid cysts can lead to serious health complications if they are not treated.

What causes hydatidosis?

Hydatidosis is caused by the intermediate stage of the dog tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus*. Over time, the parasites grow larger and turn into a cyst.



Hydatid cysts in a carcass. Source: WOAH

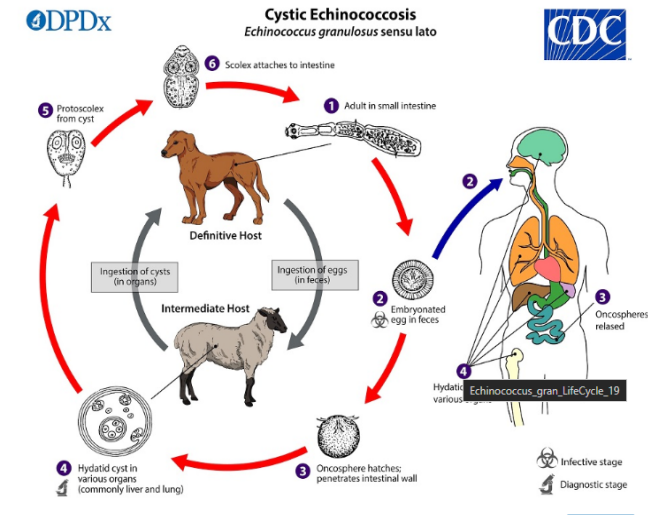


A dog eating offals. Source: ILRI

How is hydatid disease transmitted?

Dogs become infected by eating cysts (intermediate tapeworm stage) in uncooked offal from infected animals, which develops into adult tapeworms. Hydatid eggs from adult dog tapeworms are dispersed in the environment via the feces of infected dogs. Grazing animals get infected by eating pasture contaminated with hydatid eggs.

People are infected when they accidentally ingest the eggs excreted in dog faeces. This can occur by patting a dog then touching your mouth, by kissing a dog, through items contaminated with soil or by consuming contaminated food or water. People are at increased risk of infection if they live in grazing areas where dogs are used to herd cattle and sheep.



Hydatidosis transmission cycle. Source: CDC

What are the symptoms of hydatid disease?

Animals show no obvious signs of disease even when cysts are detected at slaughter. Symptoms in people vary according to the number, size and location of cysts within the body. When hydatid cysts enlarge in the liver, lungs or other organs they may cause:

- Bloody stools
- Coughing
- Enlarged abdomen
- Jaundice (yellow skin) and skin rash
- Mass in mid section
- Nausea and vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Unexplained weight loss
- Eventual death