



ICEH Community Education Flyer

HYDATIDS

High-dat-ids

Other words: tapeworm

What causes Hydatids?

Hydatid disease is a serious and sometimes fatal disease that is caused by a tapeworm.

People can get hydatid disease by swallowing eggs laid by tapeworms that live in dogs, dingoes and foxes. These eggs form sack-like cysts in the body, which can make a person very sick if they burst.

A person may get hydatids by not washing their hands after touching dogs, dingoes and foxes, or by eating food or drinking water contaminated with tapeworm eggs. People may also get hydatids by mouth contact with items like eating tools contaminated with eggs. This may occur if flies land on them, or if they come into contact with dirt that contains tapeworm eggs.

How might I know that I have Hydatids?

Most cases are identified by accident during other medical checks.

Signs that a person may have hydatids can vary widely and may include:

- * Severe allergic reactions (if cyst bursts)
- * Yellowing of skin
- * Coughing
- * Tiredness
- * Chest Pain

It is also common for people to not feel sick early on during the infection.

How do I avoid getting ill?

Do:

- ✓ Avoid contact with dog faeces (shit).
- ✓ Wash hands after touching dogs, and before handling or eating food.
- ✓ Worm dogs regularly.
- ✓ Keep dogs out of food growing and children's play areas.
- ✓ Stop children from playing with working dogs, or dogs they don't know.
- ✓ Clean animal living areas regularly.
- ✓ Collect and dispose of dog poo so it does not contaminate soil.

Do Not:

- ✓ Feed offal (animal organs) to dogs.

This sheet is for information only. For further information contact your Environmental Health Worker, doctor, hospital, or local health clinic.

