



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Investigation Branch

Oahu 586-4586, Maui 984-8213, Hilo 933-0912,

Kona 322-4877, Kauai 241-3563

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## Trichinosis

(trichinellosis)

### What is trichinosis?

Trichinosis, also called trichinellosis, is a disease caused by a parasitic intestinal roundworm called *Trichinella*. In Hawaii, it is mostly found in the meat of wild pigs, although it could also be found in other wild and domestic animals, including pets that are exposed to wild pigs.

### How do you get it?

You can get trichinosis by eating raw or undercooked meats (chiefly, pork and pork products), infected with the roundworm larvae. You can also get it from eating undercooked wild game meat (bear, pork, fox, dog, or horse) or inadequately smoked pork products. Person-to-person transmission does not occur.

The most common exposure is in hunting wild pigs or eating undercooked wild pig meat, most often smoked meat that is not properly cooked after smoking.

### What are the symptoms of trichinosis?

Abdominal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur as little as 1-2 days after getting infected. Other symptoms may start as much as 2-8 weeks later. Later symptoms may include headache, fever, chills, cough, aching joints and muscle pains, itchy skin, diarrhea or constipation, and swelling around the eyes. A blood or tissue test is needed to confirm a diagnosis of trichinella.

### What is the treatment for trichinosis?

A doctor can prescribe medicine to kill the worms and their larvae.

### How can you keep from getting it?

Fresh pork, pork products, and meat taken from wild game animals should be cooked until inside temperatures reach at least 171°F, or until the meat changes from a pink to gray color and the juices are clear with no blood. Cooked poultry, stuffed meat, and all stuffing must reach a minimum internal temperature of at least 165°F, to kill any *Trichinella* larvae.

Microwave ovens may produce uneven internal temperatures when cooking meats. When cooking pork, ham, sausage, or bacon in a microwave oven, heat to a minimum internal temperature of 170°F. Also, meats cooked in BBQ smokers may not reach a high enough internal temperature to kill the parasites.

Grind pork in a separate grinder, or wash the grinder carefully before and after processing other meats.

When purchasing ground meat, be sure that the meat grinder used in grinding the meat was properly washed and sanitized before use.

Freezing infected meats at -13 °F for 10 days or longer will also kill the parasite.

Do not feed domestic animals uncooked foods, especially wild animal meat.

**For more information**, see the CDC's website:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/trichinosis/factsht\\_trichinosis.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/trichinosis/factsht_trichinosis.htm)