



1. What is cysticercosis?

Cysticercosis (sis-*tuh*-ser-koh-sis) is an infectious disease caused by a pork tapeworm. The infection forms fluid filled sacs (cysts) that can travel to the muscles, eyes, brain, and spinal cord, causing severe damage if not treated.

2. How do you get cysticercosis?

You can get cysticercosis by:

- Accidentally swallowing pork tapeworm eggs found in contaminated fruits, vegetables, water and undercooked pork..
- Preparing food without properly washing hands after a bowel movement.

3. How do you know if you have cysticercosis?

Most people infected with this disease don't show any symptoms. However, if symptoms do occur, it depends on where the infection is found.

If infection is in the intestines:

- Nausea
- Weakness
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Weight loss

If infection has spread to other tissues:

- Fever
- Cystic masses or lumps
- Allergic reactions to the worm eggs
- Bacterial infections
- Seizures

Testing for cysticercosis may include blood tests, stool samples, or in some cases, MRI or CT Scan.

4. How is cysticercosis treated?

Cysticercosis can be treated in different ways:

- Medication could be given to control the swelling and seizures.
- Surgery may be needed to remove eye cysts.
- In some cases, doctors decide not to treat cysticercosis. Your doctor can determine the best method of treatment based on the number of cysts and the symptoms you are experiencing.

5. How can cysticercosis be prevented?

- Wash hands with soap and water:
 - Before preparing food
 - Before you eat
 - After using the bathroom
 - After changing diapers
 - After handling animals
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure all meats are cooked to at least 150°F.
- Wash and peel all fruits and vegetables before eating.

Sources

1. *Cysticercosis*. L.A. County Department of Public Health.. <http://www.lapublichealth.org/acd/Diseases.htm>
2. *Cysticercosis*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov>
3. *Cysticercosis*. California Department of Public Health. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/>
4. *Cysticercosis*. Medline Plus. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000627.htm>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.