



## Durham Region Health Department **FAX about...**

For Health Care Professionals



# ***Echinococcus multilocularis* in Durham Region**

*Echinococcus multilocularis* (*E. multilocularis*) is a parasitic infection in humans primarily transmitted through the accidental consumption of contaminated fecal matter of infected canids (coyotes, foxes, dogs). Humans infected with *E. multilocularis* are typically asymptomatic for the first 5-15 years after exposure before developing non-specific symptoms such as abdominal pain, malaise and weight loss. Alveolar echinococcosis (AE) may occur where tumor-like cysts form in various parts of the body such as the liver. If left untreated, the disease can be fatal.

Important preventive measures include good hygiene practices (especially handwashing) when handling wild or domestic canid feces or after exposure to areas where wild or domestic canids may have defecated. Routine (monthly) deworming of dogs that may be exposed to infected rodents can reduce the risk of infection in domestic dogs, as well as within-household exposure to parasite eggs from infected pets. This infection cannot be transmitted from person-to-person.

**Ontario is now considered an endemic area for *E. multilocularis*, creating the potential for human exposure. Recently, *E. multilocularis* was found in a chipmunk in Port Perry.** Since *E. multilocularis* became a Disease of Public Health Significance in Ontario in 2018, there have been no reported human cases in Durham Region.

## **Testing and Diagnosis**

Diagnosis is complex and based on serodiagnosis for early stages of infection, and histopathology for later stages of infection when lesions have become apparent in the liver or other organs. Serologic testing for *E. multilocularis* is not performed in Canada but can be coordinated with approval by Public Health Ontario's microbiologist (Contact PHO's customer service (416-235-6556, 1-877-604-4567, or [customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca](mailto:customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca)) for approval).

## **Action Requested**

Consider *E. multilocularis* as a possible differential diagnosis in clients with non-specific symptoms who also handle wild or domestic canid feces.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](http://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



# Reporting

*Echinococcus multilocularis* is a reportable Disease of Public Health Significance in Ontario. To report suspect and confirmed cases of *E. multilocularis*, please call:

- Phone: 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 ext. 7369
- Confidential Fax: 905-666-1833
- After Hours: 905-576-9991 or 1-800-372-1104

The Diseases of Public Health Significance list and notification form can also be found on the Reportable Diseases [landing page](#) (or [durham.ca/hcp](http://durham.ca/hcp), Forms, Reporting, Diseases of Public Health Significance).

Additional information on *E. multilocularis* can be found [here](#) (or search the Public Health Ontario webpage for *E. multilocularis*).

If you have any feedback about Fax Abouts or want to recommend a topic for distribution, please email [Faxabout@durham.ca](mailto:Faxabout@durham.ca).

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