

Trichinella spiralis

Trichinella spiralis (sometimes referred to as trichina, or trichinae in the plural) is a parasitic nematode (roundworm) associated with pork and wild game. It goes through various stages of its life cycle in a single host. Ingestion of cysts in the muscles of infected animals results in release of larvae from the cysts in the intestine; maturation of the larvae into adult worms in the epithelial cells of the small intestine; mating of the worms to produce new larvae; migration of the larvae to the circulatory system, which carries the larvae to muscle where the larvae form cysts. As a result of U.S. regulations, trichinosis from pork is no longer a concern. Recent cases have been attributed to the consumption of improperly cooked wild game, such as bear.

There are a number of effective ways to kill trichinae. These may include heating pork products to a minimum time/temperature combination, freezing for a specified time at a specified temperature, or curing according to specified methods.