



## Client Fact Sheet: *Echinococcus multilocularis*

Regular walks with your pet are an enjoyable and healthy habit. If your walk routinely includes city parks and other areas where animals mingle, please talk to your veterinarian about necessary vaccines and parasite control. The tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, which is increasing in prevalence in rodents and coyotes in urban parks, is prevented by careful hygiene just as with other parasites.

### How do pets get this infection?

1. Cat and dogs get the infection by eating infected rodents. This leads to them developing the adult worm and passing eggs with their fecal matter.
2. In rare cases, dogs can develop disease in places like the liver.

### How can humans get infected?

1. Eating fruits and vegetables contaminated with eggs is believed to be the most common mode of infection.
2. By handling contaminated soil (e.g. children playing outside and not washing hands before eating).
3. By ingesting the eggs from an infected pet's fur (for instance, after the pet scent rolls) or other areas in the home that could have been contaminated with fecal matter. The eggs are tiny and not visible to the human eye.

### How can I prevent infection in my pet?

1. Don't allow pets to wander freely and unobserved to capture and eat small rodents or other animals' fecal matter.
2. If pets are allowed off leash, discuss parasite control with your veterinarian.
3. Pick up fecal matter as soon as possible both in your backyard and in the park.

### How can I prevent infection in myself and my family?

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and warm water after handling pets, and before handling food.
2. Teach children the importance of thoroughly washing hands to prevent infection.
3. Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables prior to eating them.
4. Thoroughly wash hands after handling soil.

### Facebook page

One Health in Practice - Alveolar Echinococcosis in Alberta.

<https://www.facebook.com/AlveolarEchinococcosisAB/>

