# Trichinella

Trichinosis is a disease caused by the larvae of a small parasitic worm which can affect both animals and humans.

## How you are infected

People become infected by eating raw, undercooked or processed meat from pigs, wild boar, horses or game animals that contain the parasite.

The infection can cause symptoms of:

- diarrhoea
- stomach cramps
- general feeling of illness

If it is not treated it can cause:

- fever
- muscle pain
- headaches

In severe cases it can affect vital organs and even lead to death.

## How animals are infected

Animals become infected when they ingest meat containing the parasitic worm.

In pigs, the sources of infection can happen when feed has been contaminated with dead wildlife such as rodents.

There are requirements for testing trichinella in pigs set out in law.

To prevent infected meat from pigs and other relevant species entering the human food chain, testing is required in the UK.

## Trichinella in feral wild boar

Wild boars that are not farmed are classified as ‘feral’.

When wild boar scavenge for food, the food they eat could be contaminated with trichinella increasing the risk of infection.

Feral wild boar that have been shot by hunters and are supplied directly to consumers or local retailers should be tested for trichinella.

Testing helps protect consumers from eating infected meat.

### Guidance for trichinella testing

The Animal Health and Plant Agency (APHA) has developed guidance for hunters on testing feral wild boar for trichinella that explains how samples should be taken and sent.

Guidance for trichinella testing in feral wild boar on the APHA website (PDF)