

Cysticercosis is a rare infectious disease caused by the presence and accumulation of the larval cysts of a tapeworm (cestode) within tissues of the body. The scientific name for the tapeworm that causes cysticercosis is *Taenia solium* (*T. solium*), which is also known as the pork tapeworm. *T. solium* cysts (cysticerci) may affect any area of the body including the brain, a condition known as neurocysticercosis. Symptoms vary from case to case. If cysticerci are located in the brain, central nervous system abnormalities may occur, most often seizures and headaches. Cysticercosis may also affect the eyes, spinal cord, skin and heart. Cysticercosis affects males and females in equal numbers. Some forms of cysticercosis such as racemose cysticercosis occur more frequently in females. Approximately 1,000 cases of cysticercosis are reported each year in the United States. The disease is more common in Mexico, Latin America, South America, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia. Cysticercosis cases have risen in the United States following increased immigration from endemic areas. Tapeworms can be acquired from various uncooked meats, including beef and fish, but only pork tapeworms appear to produce larvae capable of invading human muscle and forming cysts. A diagnosis of cysticercosis may be made based upon a thorough clinical evaluation, a detailed patient history and a variety of specialized tests. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography (CT) scan may be used to diagnose neurocysticercosis.