

OPISTHORCHIS INFECTION

What is Opisthorchis?

- Opisthorchis is a species of liver fluke parasites living on fishes found in several Asian and European countries.
- Opisthorchis felinus and Opisthorchis viverrini are classified as one of the major liver flukes that can infect humans all around the world.

Who can get infected with Opisthorchis and who is at a higher risk for Opisthorchis infection?

- Opisthorchis infection occurs in humans. People who reside/ travel to several European and Asian countries are at a higher risk of getting infected with this parasite.
- However, fishes from such countries when imported to other countries, can also lead to the spread of Opisthorchis infection.

How can humans get infected with opisthorchis?

- Opisthorchis infects humans in their liver, gallbladder and bile duct.
- This parasite can be ingested by humans who consume raw/ undercooked fish from such areas.
- Once ingested, the larva matures into worms and lives inside the bile duct system of humans.

Signs and symptoms

- Most humans show no symptoms when they are infected by this parasite.
- However, some symptoms include indigestion, diarrhea, constipation or abdominal pain.
- This infection persists upto 25-30 years typically if it is left untreated. Persistent infections can lead to gallbladder inflammation, bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma), hepatitis B, C and other liver diseases.
- Moreover, symptoms of *O. felinus* also include facial swelling, swollen lymph glands, fever and rash.
- Opisthorchis cannot be directly transmitted from one person to another.