**Hymenolepis diminuta**

**Introduction**

*Hymenolepis diminuta* is a small tapeworm commonly found in rats and mice. It has a world wide distribution in these hosts but is infrequently found in humans, with only sporadic cases being reported.

**Life cycle**

The life cycle of *H. diminuta* requires an intermediate arthropod host e.g. earwigs, larval fleas and various beetles. Human infection occurs by the accidental ingestion of an infected arthropod which contains the cysticercoids.

1. **Humans ingest arthropod containing cysticercoid**
2. **Arthropod ingests egg which becomes an aplicaercoid**
3. **Eggs are liberated from the adult proglottids and passed out in the stool**
4. **Cysticercoids attach to the mucosa of the small intestine**
5. **Cysticercoids develop into adult worms**

**Clinical Disease**

The symptoms associated with *H. diminuta* infections are few if any.

**Laboratory Diagnosis**

Diagnosis is based on recovery and identification of the characteristic ova in a formol-ether concentrate of faeces. The ova are large, ovoid and yellowish with a moderately thick shell.
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They contain an onchosphere with 6 hooklets and a clear area between the onchosphere and the shell. They measure 70 - 85μm by 60 - 80μm. Adult worms and proglottids are rarely seen in stool samples.

An ovum of *Hymenolepis diminuta*