

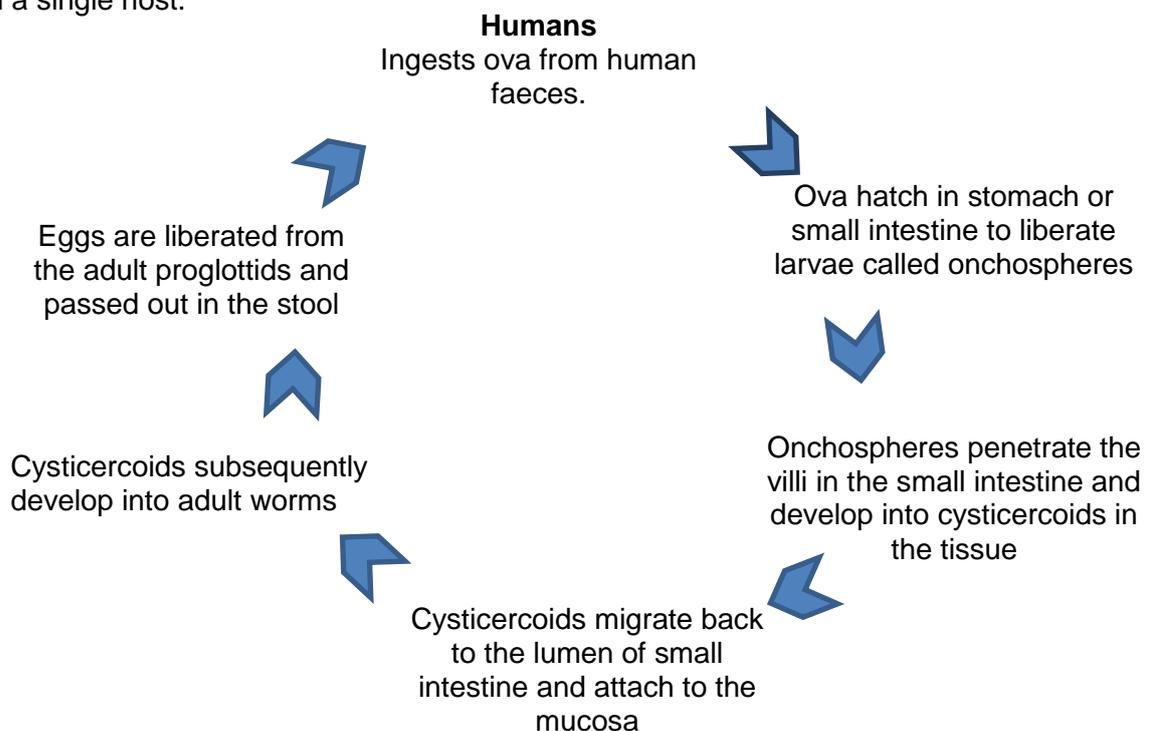
Hymenolepis nana

Introduction

Hymenolepis nana, the dwarf tapeworm, is the smallest tapeworm to infect humans. It has a cosmopolitan distribution and is thought to be the most common tapeworm throughout the world. The infection is more frequently seen in children although adults are also infected.

Life cycle

The lifecycle of *H.nana* does not require an intermediate host, complete development occurring within a single host.

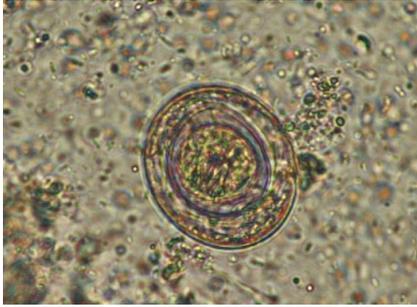


Clinical Disease

Infections due to *H. nana* may cause no symptoms even with heavy worm burdens. However, symptoms of anorexia, abdominal pain and diarrhoea have been reported. Heavy worm burdens may be caused by auto-infection which can be a problem in the immunocompromised.

Laboratory Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based on recovery and identification of the characteristic ova in a formol-ether concentrate of faeces. Ova are spherical or ovoid measuring 30 - 47 μ in diameter. The onchosphere contains three pairs of hooklets and is surrounded by a membrane. This membrane has 2 polar thickenings from which arise threadlike filaments extending into the space between the membrane and the colourless hyaline shell, unlike those of *H. diminuta* which do not possess any filaments. Adult worms and proglottids are rarely seen in stool samples.



An ovum of *Hymenolepis nana*