**Blastocystis hominis**

**Introduction**

*B. hominis* is an inhabitant of the human intestinal tract. It is capable of both sexual and asexual reproduction by binary fission and of pseudopod extension and retraction.

**Morphology**

The classic form that is usually seen in stool specimens varies in size from 6 - 40 microns and is characterised by a large membrane bound central body which occupies 90% of the cell. It has no internal nuclear structure and a rim of peripheral granules the function of which is not known.

**Clinical disease**

The pathogenic potential of *B. hominis* is unclear, though this organism has been associated with nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

**Diagnosis**

Permanently stained preparations of faecal smears is the procedure of choice for identification, although the organism can be seen in wet preparations. The recommended stains are Fields’ and Giemsa.

![A cyst of Blastocystis hominis in a formol-ether concentrate](image)
Cysts of *Blastocystis hominis* stained with Giemsa stain