



Types of Parasitic Infections, its Causes and Symptoms

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DESCRIPTION

Parasitic infections are caused by the presence and growth of parasites in a host organism. These infections are a major global health issue affecting millions of people, particularly in developing countries where access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare is limited. Parasites can infect both animals and humans, and they can cause a range of symptoms and health problems.

Parasites are organisms that live on or inside other organisms, known as hosts, and they depend on the host for survival. They can be classified into three main types based on their location in the host's body: ectoparasites, endoparasites, and protozoa. Ectoparasites live on the surface of the host, such as lice and fleas. Endoparasites live inside the host's body, such as tapeworms and roundworms. Protozoa are single-celled parasites that can live inside or outside the host's body, such as the parasites that cause malaria and giardiasis.

Parasitic infections can be transmitted through a variety of routes, including ingestion of contaminated food and water, contact with contaminated soil or feces, and through insect bites. The risk of parasitic infection is higher in areas with poor sanitation, inadequate access to clean water, and where hygiene practices are suboptimal.

The symptoms of parasitic infections vary depending on the type of parasite and the location of the infection. Common symptoms include fever, fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and skin rashes. Some parasitic infections can cause more serious complications, such as liver damage, anemia, and neurological problems.

Treatment for parasitic infections depends on the type of parasite and the severity of the infection. In some cases, medication may be needed to kill the parasite and reduce the symptoms of the infection. In other cases, surgery may be necessary to remove the parasite or damaged tissue.

Prevention of parasitic infections is a key in reducing their impact on public health. This includes improving access to clean water and sanitation, promoting good hygiene practices, and controlling the spread of parasites through insect vectors. In addition, travellers to areas where parasitic infections are common should take precautions such as drinking bottled water, avoiding raw or undercooked food, and using insect repellent.

Some common parasitic infections

Malaria: Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal parasitic infection caused by the Plasmodium parasite, which is transmitted through the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Malaria is a major public health issue in many parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Symptoms of malaria include fever, chills, and flu-like symptoms.

Chagas disease: It is also known as American trypanosomiasis, is caused by the Trypanosoma cruzi parasite, which is transmitted by blood-sucking insects known as triatomine bugs. Chagas disease is endemic in Latin America and can cause serious heart and digestive system problems if left untreated.

Giardiasis: Giardiasis is a parasitic infection caused by the Giardia lamblia protozoa. It is usually transmitted through ingestion of contaminated food or water. Symptoms of giardiasis include diarrhea, abdominal pain, and bloating.

Toxoplasmosis: Toxoplasmosis is caused by the Toxoplasma gondii protozoa and is usually transmitted through contact with cat feces or contaminated food. While most people with toxoplasmosis do not experience symptoms, it can cause serious problems in people with weakened immune systems and pregnant women.

Tapeworms: Tapeworms are a type of endoparasite that can live in the intestines of humans and animals. They are usually contracted through ingestion of contaminated food or water.

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