

Cysticercosis

General:

Cysticercosis is an infection caused by the pork tapeworm (*Taenia solium*). The pork tapeworm has a round scolex with a double rostellum. The tapeworms can be up to 4 meters long. An infection occurs through raw pork meat (tapeworm infection) or by fecal food contamination (cysticercosis). While the tapeworm infection shows minor symptoms, cysticercosis can be dramatic.

Clinical symptoms: Larvae can develop from eggs after 10 weeks. The so-called cysticerci cellulosa (larvae) are found primarily in subcutaneous and intermuscular tissue, then in the eye (ocular cysticercosis) and rarely in the brain (neurocysticercosis). Symptoms of the skeletal muscular system are myalgia and paresis, especially if calcified cysticercs affect nerves (life span of larvae is 3 years).

In neurocysticercosis there is a serious clinical picture; sometimes with lethal outcome (life span of the larvae is 10 years). Strength and type of symptoms depend on the location of cysticercs. Neurological focal symptoms, focal and generalized convulsions and psychoses are seen. Cysticercs are also frequently found in ventricles (increased CSF- and intracranial pressure). Cysticercs in the spinal cord cause sensory and motor breakdowns up to a paraplegia. Ocular cysticercosis results in visual disturbances and sometimes in exophthalmus.

Diagnostics: When suspecting cysticercosis a biopsy (e.g. of skin alterations) should be done. Suspecting neurocysticercosis, CT or MRI should be performed. In ocular cysticercosis, eye endoscopy is recommended. The serological examination of serum and CSF is important.

The following tests are available:

- **Cysticercosis antibodies**

Indication: Suspicion of cysticercosis

Material: 1 ml serum

TAT: 7-10 days*

Method: EIA

Units: U/mL

Ref.- range: <9.0

• **Cysticercosis antibodies Western blot**

Material: 1 ml serum

TAT: 7-10 days*

Method: Western blot

For complete list of laboratory test offered at Freiburg Medical Laboratory, please visit
<http://www.fml-dubai.com/parameter-listings/>