

Sanar | International
Hospitals

+91-124-3528444

Golf Course Road, DLF Phase-5
Sector - 53, Haryana - 122002

www.sanarhospitals.com
info@sanarhospitals.com

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What is **Hydatid Cyst**



What is Hydatid Cyst?

Hydatid Cyst, also known as Echinococcosis, is a potentially serious parasitic infection caused by the larval stage of the tapeworm, Echinococcus. These Cysts can develop in various organs of the body, with the liver and lungs being the most commonly affected sites. Hydatid Cyst is a significant health concern worldwide, especially in rural and agricultural communities where close contact with dogs and livestock is common.

Symptoms of Hydatid Cyst

The symptoms of Hydatid Cyst can vary depending on the location and size of the cyst. Some common symptoms may include:

- Abdominal pain or discomfort
- Coughing or chest pain
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Allergic reactions
- Breathing difficulties
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue and weakness

Causes of Hydatid Cyst

Hydatid Cysts are caused by the Echinococcus tapeworm. The primary route of infection occurs when humans come into contact with the faeces of infected dogs or consume food or water contaminated with the eggs of the tapeworm. Ingested eggs release larvae that penetrate the intestinal wall and travel through the bloodstream to various organs, where they form the Cyst.

Diagnosis of Hydatid Cyst

Diagnosing Hydatid Cyst often involves a combination of imaging techniques such as Ultrasound, CT scans, and MRI scans. Blood tests may also be conducted to detect specific antibodies produced in response to the infection.

Treatment of Hydatid Cyst

The treatment of Hydatid Cyst typically involves a combination of medical and surgical interventions. Some common treatment options include:

- **Medication:** Antiparasitic medications such as Albendazole or Mebendazole may be prescribed to shrink the cysts and prevent further growth. USG guided medical therapy is also an option in some cases
- **Surgery:** Surgical removal of the cysts may be necessary in cases where the cysts are large or causing complications. However, surgical procedures must be performed with caution to avoid cyst rupture and potential spread of the infection.

Prevention of Hydatid Cyst

Preventing Hydatid Cyst involves taking certain precautions, such as:

- **Maintaining good hygiene:** Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after handling animals or their faeces.
- **Avoiding contact with stray dogs:** Do not approach or pet stray dogs, and avoid areas where dog faeces are present.
- **Properly cooked food:** Ensure that meat is thoroughly cooked to kill any potential parasites.

When to Consult a Healthcare Professional

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above or suspect that you may have been exposed to the parasite, it is crucial to consult a healthcare professional immediately for a proper diagnosis and appropriate treatment.