

# **ZOONOTIC AND GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES**

**QANUILIRPITAA? 2017 HEALTH SURVEY** 

**Zoonotic diseases** (rabies, trichinellosis, toxoplasmosis) are caused by pathogens (viruses/worms/parasites) (Lyssavirus, Trichinella nativa, Toxoplasma gondii) transmitted by infected animals.

Gastrointestinal illnesses (helicobacteriosis, cryptosporidiosis) are caused by pathogens (Helicobacter pylori) transmitted mainly by people and possibly by contaminated food or water.

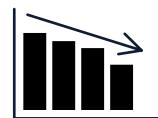
## **ZOONOTIC DISEASES**

In the 12 months before the survey, **DOG BITES AND SCRATCHES** were

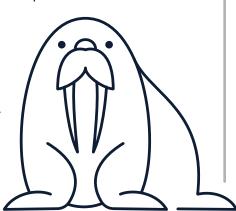
reported by 6% of Nunavimmiut. No cases of human rabies have ever been documented in Nunavik.



TRICHINELLA NATIVA: Antibodies were found in 3% of Nunavimmiut (the presence of antibodies indicates a previous exposure to the pathogen). Additional work is needed to determine if raw seal meat consumption is a source of exposure to Trichinella nativa.



TOXOPLASMA GONDII: 4 out of 10 people were found to have antibodies against this parasite in 2017 (42%), which is lower than in 2004 (6 out of 10 people; 60%). It suggests a decrease in exposure to the pathogen. The survey results indicate that the consumption of raw shellfish (mussels, scallops, clams and urchins) may be associated with T. gondii exposure.



# WHAT CAN BE DONE?

To prevent **TRICHINELLOSIS**, it is important to cook all polar bear and black bear meat thoroughly as well as the meat of other land carnivores. Also, hunters should continue to send

the TONGUES OF HARVESTED WALRUSES to the Nunavik Research Centre for testing, before any meat is consumed.



Toxoplasmosis can be a greater risk for people with a weak immune system and can affect the development of fetuses. If you have a **WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEM** or are **PREGNANT**\*, it is recommended to:

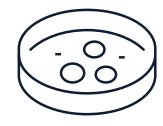
- COOK MEAT, SHELLFISH, EGGS, and FISH\*\* before consumption;
- or **FREEZE** those foods for at least 3 days if you want to eat them raw, dried or smoked;
- avoid drinking untreated **WATER**;
- WASH YOUR HANDS CAREFULLY if you handle raw meat or fish.
- \* PREGNANT: These recommendations apply only to pregnant women who do not have the antibodies (according to the test offered at the beginning of pregnancy).
- \*\* FISH: Traces of bacteria causing toxoplasmosis have been detected in tissues of local fish; more research is under way to confirm whether or not fish can transmit the disease to humans.

## **GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES**

#### **HELICOBACTER PYLORI:**

H. pylori is a bacteria that can be found in the stomach. Most infected people do not have symptoms but others can develop ulcers (burning pain) or chronic inflammation. In 2017, 7 out of 10 Nunavimmiut had this bacteria (70%). This proportion is similar to that of other Inuit and Indigenous populations but is higher than in the non-Indigenous Canadian population.





To avoid **GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES**:

DONE?

- **WASH YOUR HANDS** regularly;
- do not share utensils and cups;
- only drink TREATED municipal WATER or water from natural sources which has been boiled (for at least one minute).



**CRYPTOSPORIDIUM SP.:** 6% of Nunavimmiut have been previously exposed

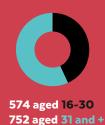
to this parasite that can

cause diarrhea.

### TO SEEK HELP ABOUT YOUR HEALTH. **CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CLSC**

Regional organizations are committed to working with the communities to ensure access to safe food and drinking water, and to prevent zoonotic and gastrointestinal diseases.

Qanuilirpitaa? 2017 is a population health survey carried out in Nunavik from August to October 2017. A total of 1326 Nunavimmiut aged 16 and over from all 14 villages participated in this survey.











For more information: nrbhss.ca/en/health-surveys