

Wild boar meat may contain the harmful *Alaria alata*

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Wild boar meat may be infected with parasites which, if consumed, can constitute a health risk for humans. Meat, therefore, undergoes hygiene tests before being placed on the market. During these tests one random finding was the detection of *Alaria alata* in wild boar. *Alaria alata* is a metacercaria, i.e. a precursor to the parasitic trematode *Alaria alata*. At the present time wild boar meat is not routinely examined for *Alaria alata*.

The adult trematode *Alaria alata* lives in the intestines of its final hosts which include foxes and martens. They excrete the eggs of the trematode in faeces. If the eggs reach water, then an intermediate host, a snail, may ingest them. There the larvae, cercariae, develop. They leave the snail and penetrate the second intermediate host, the tadpole where they develop into metacercariae. The circle is complete when a final host ingests the infected second intermediate hosts from food. Metacercariae can also develop in and infect other animals and humans. In wild boar they are called *Alaria alata*. This germ attacks the muscles and adjacent fatty tissue. Consumers can develop larval alariosis when they eat infected, not sufficiently heated meat. The symptoms and outcome of the disease depend on the number and type of *Alaria* metacercariae ingested.

In the opinion of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) the findings indicate that it is possible to fall ill from eating the infected meat. Wild boar meat should not, therefore, be released for consumption in the case of a positive finding. Furthermore, the Institute recommends developing a suitable method to detect *Alaria alata* in order to be able to better judge its incidence in Germany.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/wildschweinfleisch_kann_den_gesundheitsgefaehrlichen_dunckerschen_muskelegel_enthalten.pdf