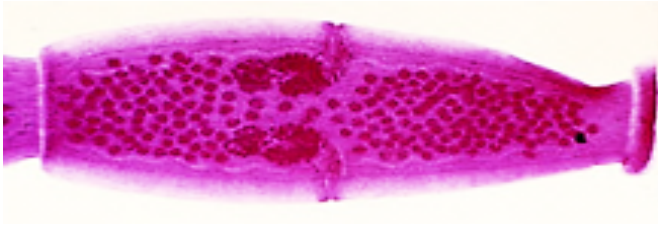


Dipylidium caninum

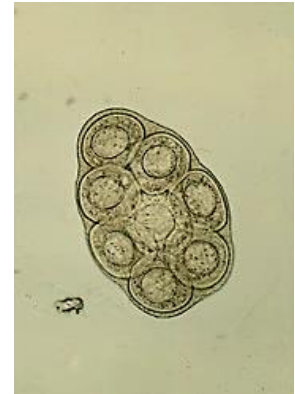


Dipylidium caninum (Linnaeus, 1758) Railliet, 1892, a cosmopolitan tapeworm of dog and cat. It has been found in children who fondle infected animals. Human cases, including young infant, have been diagnosed from Europe, the Orient, Africa, Latin America, and the United States. The adult worms are medium-sized, measuring from 10 to 50 cm in length, and consist of several hundred of proglottids.

The distalmost gravid proglottids are more or less pumpkin-seed-shaped. In children, the infection frequently solitary. The intact gravid proglottids, containing polygonal-shaped masses of egg capsules, separate from the strobila and pass down the intestinal canal and out of the anus, free or in the feces.



Mature proglottid

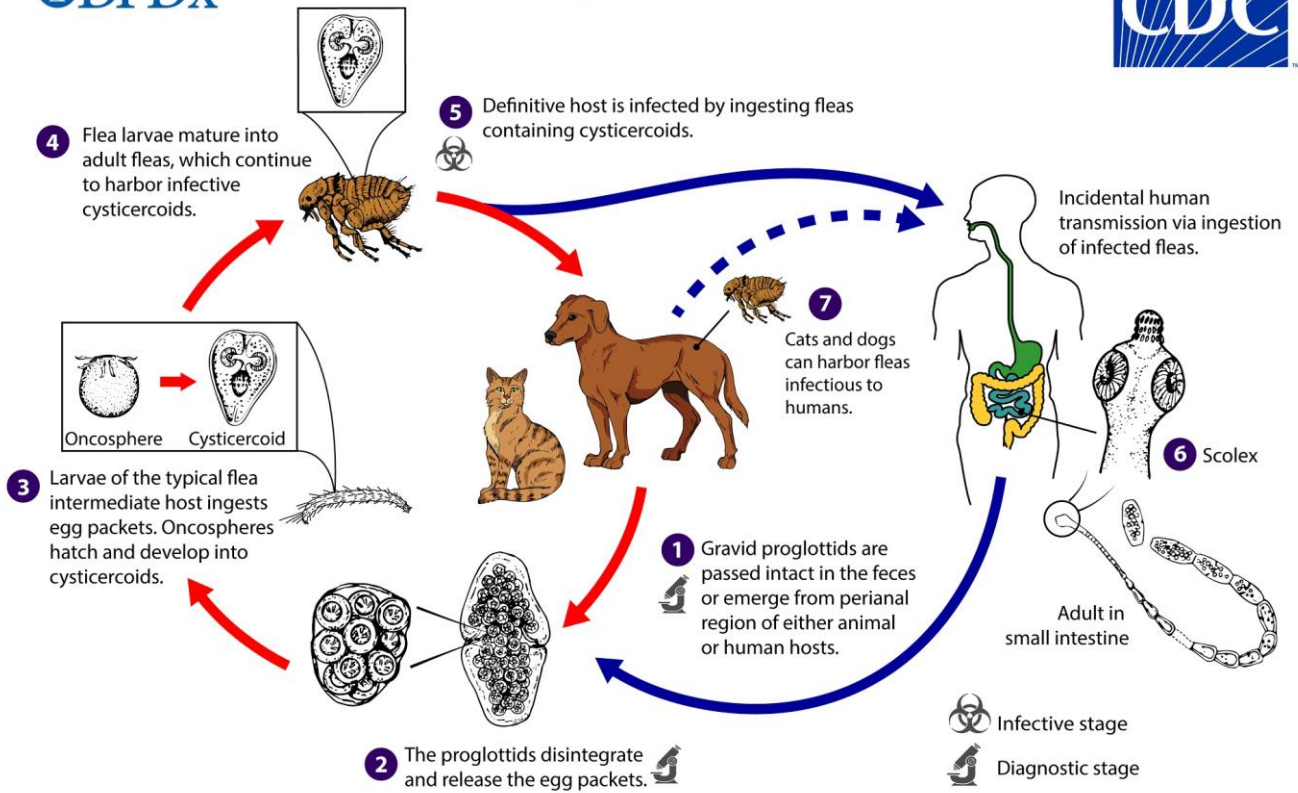


Egg mass

Once the proglottids reach soil they become dehydrated and fragment, setting free the egg capsules, each of which contains several fully embryonated eggs. When the fleas, lice, and possibly other arthropods ingest the egg capsules or individual eggs, the liberated embryo transforms into a cysticercoid larva. The definitive host (human) becomes infected by ingesting an infected larval or adult insect.

This infection in the child may produce profuse diarrhea and unrest. Occasionally there may be severe sensitization reactions, such as urticaria, fever, significant eosinophilia.

Diagnosis is made on recovery of the characteristic gravid proglottids evacuated in the stool or migrating out of the anus, and observing the polygonal pattern of the mother embryonic membranes within the uterus of this cestode. Treatment is the same as that recommended for *Taenia saginata* and *Hymenolepis nana* (praziquantel), the drug is generally well-tolerated.



The life cycle of *Dipylidium caninum*