

Protect your pets from **rat lungworm** disease

What is it?

A disease caused by the parasite *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, carried by rats, slugs and snails. In pets - especially dogs - it can cause severe neurologic illness.

How pets get infected

- Eating or licking infected snails, slugs, frogs or lizards
- Drinking contaminated water or eating unwashed produce
- Infection occurs when larvae are swallowed

Signs to watch for

- Hind limb weakness, paralysis or pain
- Back or neck pain
- Loss of coordination (ataxia)
- Muscle loss (atrophy)
- Tail paralysis or urinary incontinence

If you notice these signs, see a veterinarian right away.

You can visit a 24-hour animal emergency clinic or urgent care if you do not have a vet.

Prevention tips

- Keep pets away from snails, slugs, frogs, toads
- Don't leave outdoor food/water bowls overnight
- Rinse vegetable and fruit well
- Ask your vet about Moxidectin preventatives

Veterinary care from a local practitioner

- Corticosteroids to reduce brain/spinal swelling
- Supportive care
- Anthelmintics

Why it matters

Both animals AND people can become infected. The parasite is found on all major Hawaiian Islands, especially in warm, wet and windward areas.

How people get sick from rat lungworm

1. Infected rats pass the worm in their droppings.



2. Slugs and snails get the worm by eating rat droppings. Freshwater prawns, frogs, crayfish, and crabs get the worm by eating slugs or snails.



3. People get sick accidentally by eating tiny slugs or snails on unrinsed, raw produce. People can also get sick from eating undercooked slugs, snails, or freshwater prawns, frogs, crayfish, or crabs.



Stay safe and enjoy paradise!

