

What is Rat Lungworm Disease?



The rat lungworm, *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, can cause a disease called angiostrongyliasis, which can affect the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms may include severe headache, stiffness of the neck and back, skin tingling, pain and sensitivity, sensitivity to light, hallucinations, nausea, vomiting and sometimes coma and death. *Symptoms will vary from person to person.*



Cuban Slug



Semi Slug

Foods such as raw produce, raw or undercooked snails, freshwater prawns, crabs and frogs can be contaminated by an unseen parasite *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* (*rat lungworm*). Fish are not known to carry this parasite. The rat lungworm is found most often in snails and slugs and has also been found in the flatworm. The worm infects rats, which pass the parasite to snails, slugs, freshwater prawns, crabs and frogs. Humans become infected by ingesting an infected host.



Baby Semi Slug on nickel



Giant African Snail

Prevention

DO NOT eat raw foods contaminated with the slime from snails or slugs or visible snail or slugs. **RINSE PRODUCE** in potable water completely, and boil snails, freshwater prawns, crabs, and frogs for **AT LEAST 3-5 MINUTES**. Do not handle snails and slugs with bare hands. Control slugs and snails at your residence.

Cover your catchment tanks to prevent slugs and snails from having access. Controlling rodents can also help control the rat lungworm. Visit our website for more prevention methods

If you think you may have angiostrongyliasis, see your health care provider and let him/her know of your exposures.

For more information call the Hawai'i District Health Office Disease Investigations office: 808-933-0912 or see CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/dpdx/angiostrongyliasis/index.html>



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We provide access to our activities without regard to race, color, national origin, language, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. For help with a problem, please contact the Disease Investigation Branch within 180 days of a problem. You may also contact our departmental Affirmative Action Officer at Box 3378, Honolulu, HI 96801-3378, or at 586-4616 (voice/tty).