



***Ascaris suum* is a worm carried by pigs that can make both pigs and people sick.**

Adult worms live in a pig's intestines and lay eggs which are shed in feces (manure). People are infected when they accidentally swallow worm eggs that grow into adult worms inside the person. When a person is infected it's called ascariasis. The worm eggs cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are very hardy and can survive for years in soil. Pigs that are raised on dirt and have access to the outdoors are more likely to be infected with *Ascaris suum* and other parasites.

**Young children are especially at risk because they tend to put their fingers and other things that may be contaminated with worm eggs in their mouths.**

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

**People:** Most infected people have only a few worms and may not have any symptoms. Some people can have symptoms including:

- difficulty breathing
- abdominal swelling and pain
- lack of appetite
- nausea
- diarrhea
- stunted growth in children

**Pigs:** Many infected pigs may not have any symptoms at all. Heavily infected pigs may have symptoms, including:

- difficulty breathing, sometimes called "thumps"
- weight loss
- unthrifty
- slow weight gain



**Both pigs and people may pass whole worms in their stool.**

## WHAT CAN I DO TO AVOID INFECTION?



### **Handwashing protects you.**

Always wash your hands with soap and water right after

- touching pigs
- cleaning the pen
- handling pig manure
- working in the soil

Adults should make sure that children wash their hands properly.

### **Safely handle manure.**

- Using pig manure as fertilizer can contaminate plants with worm eggs. People can be infected if the plants are eaten without washing them first or cooking them.
- You can make pig manure safe to use on your garden by composting it. High temperatures will kill the worm eggs. The core temperature of the compost must be greater than 140°F for at least six weeks before using it on your garden. Contact your local Agriculture Extension Service for more information on composting manure.
- Make sure young children do not have access to pig pens, manure areas, or composting areas.



### **If you use pig manure on your garden:**

- Always wash produce thoroughly before cooking or eating it.
- Cooking produce, like boiling or roasting, will kill any worm eggs that might still be present.

**If you raise pigs, be aware of the risks to human health.  
Work with a veterinarian to keep your pigs healthy and parasite-free.**



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

For more information on parasites visit [www.cdc.gov/parasites](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites)