

Complete Information on Balantidiasis with Treatment and Prevention

Balantidiasis also known balantidium coli. Balantidium coli is a ciliated protozoan, and it is also the largest human protozoan. It is known to parasitize the colon, and pigs may be its primary reservoir. Balantidiasis occurs most commonly in areas with poor sanitation and in settings where humans live in close contact with pigs, sheep, or goats. Common symptoms of Balantidiasis include chronic diarrhea, occasional dysentery (diarrhea with passage of blood or mucus), nausea, foul breath, colitis (inflammation of the colon), abdominal pain, weight loss, deep intestinal ulcerations, and possibly perforation of the intestine.

These symptoms are non-specific and common to other conditions such as amebic dysentery or amebiasis. Complications may include intestinal perforation in which the intestinal wall becomes torn, but the organisms do not spread to other parts of the body in the blood stream. B coli occurs as a trophozoite and a cyst in the colon. The trophozoites replicate by binary fission and conjugation, and they subsist on bacteria. Most infections in immunocompetent individuals are asymptomatic. Humans ingest infective cysts, which then migrate to the large intestine, cecum, and terminal ileum.

The organisms primarily dwell in the lumen, but they also can pierce the mucosa and cause ulcers. Hyaluronidase is produced by this organism, which may enhance its ability to invade the mucosa. B coli has a worldwide distribution with an estimated prevalence of 1%. Epidemics have occurred in psychiatric hospitals in the United States. Balantidiasis are treated with prescription medication, typically consisting of a ten day course of either tetracycline or metronidazole. Alternative drugs that have proven effective in treating balantidiasis include iodoquinol or paromomycin.

Prevention requires effective personal and community hygiene. Some Prevention involve monitoring the contacts of balantidiasis patients. Proper food handling. Measures include protecting food from contamination by flies, cooking food correctly, washing one's hands after using the bathroom and before cooking or eating, and avoiding foods that cannot be cooked or peeled when traveling in countries with high rates of balantidiasis. Purification of drinking water is helpful this condition. Water can be purified by filtering, boiling, or treatment with iodine. Consult a gastroenterologist for patients requiring a colonoscopy.

About the Author

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