

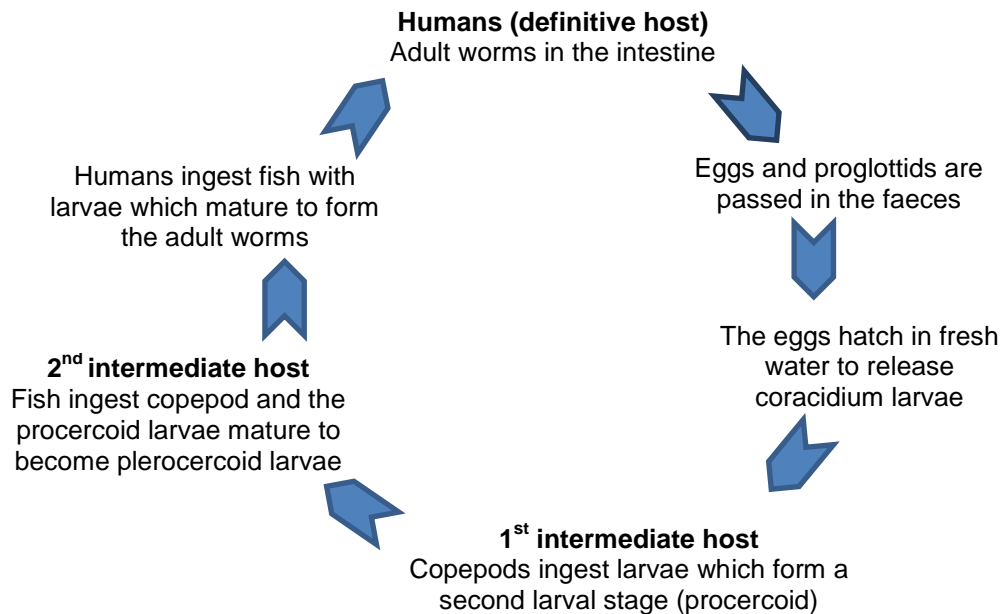
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## ***Diphyllobothrium latum***

### **Introduction**

*Diphyllobothrium latum* is an intestinal cestode or tapeworm which possesses a scolex with 2 bothria unlike the typical 4 suckers seen on the *Taenia* species. It has no hooks. The worm is widely distributed in sub-arctic regions..

### **Life cycle**

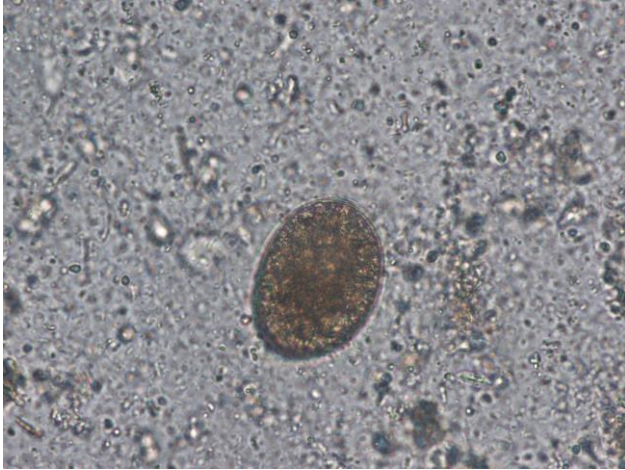


### **Clinical Disease**

The infection caused by *D. latum* is due to the ingestion of raw, poorly cooked or pickled fresh water fish. The symptoms associated with *D. latum* infection may be absent or minimal with eosinophilia. There may be occasional intestinal obstruction, diarrhoea, abdominal pain or anaemia. The worm may also cause a vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency which may resemble pernicious anaemia in a small percentage of people.

### Laboratory diagnosis

Laboratory diagnosis depends on the recovery of characteristic eggs from a formol ether concentrate of faeces. The eggs are ovoid, operculate and yellow brown in colour. They are 58 - 75 $\mu$  by 40 - 50 $\mu$ . The egg usually has a small knob at the abopercular end. Proglottids may also be seen in faecal samples usually in a chain of segments from a few centimetres to about 0.5 metres in length. The proglottids measure 3mm long and 11mm wide and have a rosette shaped central uterus. The adult worm reaches a length of 10 metres or more and may contain up to 3,000 proglottids.



An ovum of *Diphylobothrium latum*