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## ***Blastocystis hominis***

### **Introduction**

*B. hominis* is an inhabitant of the human intestinal tract. It is capable of both sexual and asexual reproduction by binary fission and of pseudopod extension and retraction.

### **Morphology**

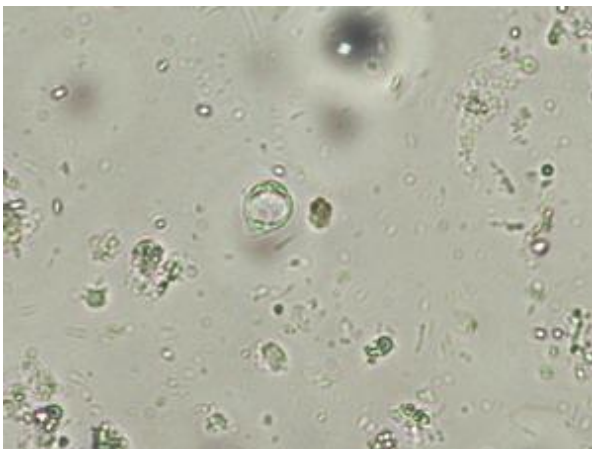
The classic form that is usually seen in stool specimens varies in size from 6 - 40 microns and is characterised by a large membrane bound central body which occupies 90% of the cell. It has no internal nuclear structure and a rim of peripheral granules the function of which is not known.

### **Clinical disease**

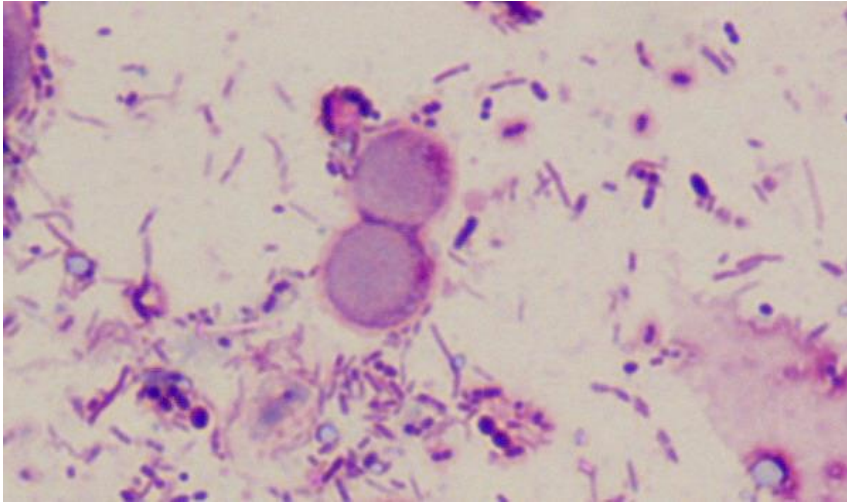
The pathogenic potential of *B. hominis* is unclear, though this organism has been associated with nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

### **Diagnosis**

Permanently stained preparations of faecal smears is the procedure of choice for identification, although the organism can be seen in wet preparations. The recommended stains are Fields' and Giemsa.



A cyst of *Blastocystis hominis* in a formol-ether concentrate



Cysts of *Blastocystis hominis* stained with Giemsa stain