

Aujeszky's Disease & Doctor B's BARF

(a.k.a. Pseudorabies or Mad Itch, or Infectious Bulbar Paralysis)

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Introduction

There are three concerns that deter pet owners from feeding pork to either themselves or their furry family members.

The first of these involves concerns about the parasitic disease trichinosis, the second is the "fragile" nature of pork meat - its tendency to rapidly spoil - and the third issue being the viral disease known as "Aujeszky's".

With reference to trichinosis and the tendency of pork meat to spoil, please refer to the article on trichinosis. The

key point of this paper is to stress that neither of these is a concern in terms of feeding Doctor B's BARF pork patties to your pet.

Aujeszky's Disease

This paper concentrates on the third worry that people have with pigs, the viral disease known as "Aujeszky's". And again, before going into the details of this really nasty disease, please note from the outset (in case you don't have the time to keep reading) that in terms of Doctor B's BARF, Aujeszky's disease is similarly not a problem.

Aujeszky's - A Disease of Pigs

Aujeszky's is a disease that is first and foremost a disease of swine. Pigs are its natural host. This means that the pig is the only animal that is able to be a carrier of the Aujeszky's virus and pass it on to other animals. (Rodents are an exception - see below).

The Aujeszky's virus is a member of the Herpes family of DNA viruses. It causes deaths (up to 100%) in young pigs and respiratory and nervous symptoms in older pigs including posterior paralysis. It causes abortions and then infertility in sows. Note that the older the pig, the less severe are the clinical signs.



All other Animals are "Dead-End" Hosts

Although the pig is the natural host for this disease, the Aujeszky's virus can infect nearly all domesticated and wild mammals including cats, cattle, dogs, goats, sheep, mink, foxes, raccoons and rats. In these animals, it results in a universally fatal Central Nervous System disease.

However, as “Dead-End” hosts, none of these animals (with one exception) are able to pass the disease on to any other animal. That exception is a rodent. Cats or dogs consuming rodents that carry the Aujeszky’s virus can acquire this disease.

Distribution of the Aujeszky’s Virus

The Aujeszky’s virus is endemic in Malaysia, Indonesia, Great Britain, Europe, USA and Africa. It is not present in Australia!

Therefore, because Australia is free of the Aujeszky’s virus and because the pork we use in Doctor B’s BARF is all Australian, all of our pork-containing products are Aujeszky’s free!

Dogs, Cats & Aujeszky’s Disease



As discussed above, dogs and cats usually acquire the disease by ingesting infected pork meat (or more rarely, by eating an infected rodent).

There is no pet to pet transmission or pet to human transmission.

The virus enters and affects the central nervous system. Infected pets show a sudden onset of clinical signs. These include a change in behaviour, malaise, depression, agitation, aggression, resistance to handling, rapid and laboured breathing, dementia, pain, ataxia, fever, seizures and intense pruritus (itching) of the head and limbs. Because of this intense itching, dogs or cats with this condition often show severe self-mutilation.

As the disease progresses to its invariably fatal end, infected animals exhibit pharyngeal paralysis, copious salivation, exaggerated swallowing efforts, vomiting, aimless vocalization, convulsions and sometimes severe enteritis. The disease progresses rapidly with death occurring in 24 to 48 hours after onset of signs. There is no effective treatment with death being the only possible outcome. Death is often preceded by coma and paralysis.

This disease is called Pseudo-rabies because of the hyper-salivation and aggression, which mimic the clinical signs seen in pets affected by rabies.

As You Can See, This is Not a Nice Disease!

However, it is a rare disease. Outbreaks are sporadic in nature. It is usually seen in pet animals from farms. The risk factors include contact with non-factory farmed swine and eating contaminated material (uncooked) from swine or infected rats. Mostly the pet in question is found dead by the owner who will usually suspect poisoning.

Some Good News for Humans

This disease does NOT infect humans. Some authorities say it may cause itching in humans, but that is about all.

Even though there is some doubt whether humans are affected, most authorities stress caution when handling potentially infected material – e.g. at autopsies.

Prevention of Aujeszky's in Companion Animals

The only way to achieve this is to not feed infected pork products to cats and dogs unless they have been thoroughly cooked. **However, if the desire is to feed raw pork** then prevention is based on feeding pork from pigs that are Aujeszky's free.

That includes all pork from Australian farms. e.g. that contained in Doctor B's BARF!

Overseas, it means pork derived from large commercial disease free piggeries. A large commercial operation could not afford to have this disease present in their pigs. They would go broke!

“Organic” Pork

Apart from Australia (where there is no Aujeszky's, so this does not apply), if there was any place where a dog was going to catch this disease from pork meat, it would be from pork derived from an organic farm. Typically, these are small piggeries where the pigs are run in dirt yards, fed swill and where the pigs are in contact with wild or feral animals and rodents etc. Unfortunately this is typical of what is happening in much of Europe and the USA.

Doctor B's BARF

As you will now be realising, Doctor B's BARF products which contain pork are 100% free of this dreadful disease. Aujeszky's is not present in Australia and all pork which is used in Doctor B's BARF products is sourced exclusively from Australia.

There is no risk of a dog contracting Aujeszky's Disease in Australia from eating Doctor B's BARF.

And remember, pork is a brilliantly healthy food in its own right, with excellent levels of anti-inflammatory polyunsaturated fatty acids and an excellent profile of the essential amino acids.

