

Video transcript: Know your enemy – Cysts

Welcome to another Museum of Human Disease “Know Your Enemy” video.

Here I have a museum specimen, a kidney. What we see in this are a multitude of these empty ball-like sacs. A cyst is an enclosed sac-like growth in the body, generally containing fluid and at times, other materials. They can form either from a blocked tube or duct, such as in this lung from a patient with cystic fibrosis, or sometimes there are genetic changes that lead to the development of cysts.

Our original specimen is of polycystic kidney disease, or polycystic ovary disease. Then there are dermoid cysts, where skin cells in a developing embryo become trapped in incorrect locations, growing overtime into a cyst encapsulating a ball of cells. All these specimens have genetic links.

Our final specimen shows cysts formed in a response to a foreign material in the body. This is a hydatid cyst in a liver. These jelly-like spheres contain thousands of heads of a new generation of tape worms. This was the result of accidentally swallowing a tape worm egg, contained in undercooked meat or dog faeces. Worm your dogs, always cook your meat properly and wash your hands. This is your enemy.