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## Man nearly dies eating slugs

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**A SYDNEY student who ate slugs from a suburban backyard for a \$20 dare got more than he bargained for when he contracted a potentially deadly form of meningitis.**

The young man was diagnosed with eosinophilic meningitis, or swelling of the brain membranes, five weeks after eating two slugs in 2001, the *Medical Journal of Australia* reports today.

His friend also ate slugs but vomited them up, losing the \$20 but saving himself a potential case of meningitis, parasitologist John Walker said.

There have been numerous similar cases recorded since 1971, including a child who died after eating garden snails and a person suspected of eating lettuce contaminated with slug or snail slime.

Dr Walker, from the University of Sydney, reports that the meningitis was caused by a worm found in rat lungs, but carried as larvae in slugs and snails.

"Repeated questioning revealed that the patient had ingested, five weeks earlier for a dare, two slugs from a garden in a Sydney suburb," Dr Walker wrote.

Dr Walker said the man needed to have fluid drained from his brain and spent 17 days in hospital. It was five months before he returned to full time studies and sport.

***This report appears on news.com.au.***