
**Microbiology of the food chain —
Methods for the detection of
Anisakidae L3 larvae in fish and
fishery products —**

**Part 2:
Artificial digestion method**

*Microbiologie de la chaîne alimentaire — Méthodes de recherche des
larves L3 d'Anisakidae dans les poissons et produits de la pêche —*

Partie 2: Méthode de digestion artificielle

ISO 23036-2:2021

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Published in Switzerland

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Foreword

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Microbiology*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 275, *Food analysis — Horizontal methods*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

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Introduction

Nematodes of the Anisakidae family have a complex life cycle involving a high number of hosts. Adult stages of Anisakidae reside in the stomach of marine mammals, where they are embedded in the mucosa. Unembryonated eggs produced by adult females are released with the faeces of marine mammals and become embryonated in seawater, where first-stage larvae (L1) develop in the eggs. The larvae moult to become free-swimming second-stage larvae (L2) and, if ingested by crustaceans, mature into third-stage larvae (L3). This stage is infective to fish and squid, and larvae are transferred between fishes through predation, maintaining the L3 stage. Some larvae migrate from the abdominal cavity into muscle tissues. Humans are incidental hosts and can be infected after ingesting raw or undercooked infected fish or cephalopods containing viable L3.

Nematodes of the family Anisakidae are the causative agents of human anisakidosis, a disease that is not only a public health hazard affecting humans, but also represents an economic problem in fishery and food safety (the term “anisakiasis”, designating the disease caused by members of the genus *Anisakis*, is also sometimes used). Worldwide, marine and wild anadromous fishes are intermediate hosts of Anisakidae, whereas marine mammals are the definitive hosts.

Visual inspection procedures for the detection of Anisakidae larvae in fish are employed to minimize the risk that contaminated fish will reach the consumer,^{[1][2]} thus preventing human anisakidosis.

The UV-press and the artificial digestion of the fish muscular tissue are the methods specifically designed to detect nematode larvae in fish and to evaluate the infestation level of a batch, and have been validated and tested in multicentre collaborative studies^[3] (see [Clause 10](#)).

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