

The top 5 most horrifying and fascinating medical cases of 2025

Humans accidentally get infected by eating raw vegetables containing or contaminated by infected slugs or snails, or by eating undercooked creatures that eat slugs or snails, such as land crabs, freshwater prawns, or frogs. In the woman's case, doctors suspected she got infected from eating raw seafood and salads on a recent trip to Hawaii, where the parasite is a known threat. Luckily, the woman was treated for the infection and made a full recovery.

3. Man gets drunk, wakes up with a medical mystery that nearly kills him

It's not every day a person gets drunk and wakes up with a medical case so enigmatic that a master clinician with an expertise in medical reasoning is called in to help crack it. But a 36-year-old did just that in a case published this year in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The man showed up at the hospital with abdominal pain, a crackling in his lungs, bacteria in his blood, liver abnormalities, an injury in his small intestine, and a blood clot in his right kidney—and no clear idea of how any of those things happened or how they were connected.

In the case report, doctors lay out how they identified all of the aspects of his condition and then how master clinician Gurpreet Dhaliwal of the University of California, San Francisco, unraveled how they fit together.

Providing a fascinating look into diagnostic sleuthing, Dhaliwal reasoned out that it all came down to beers and a toothpick. The man—who had a history of binge drinking—got drunk, ate something, and accidentally swallowed a toothpick, Dhaliwal surmised. While still drunk, the man aspirated some of the food, causing his lung infection. The toothpick, meanwhile, pierced his small intestine near his right kidney, causing the injury and the blood clot. The injury then became infected, causing sepsis and his liver abnormalities.

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