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## Wolves with Infamous Mind-Altering Parasite Experience Unusual Changes: ScienceAlert

### Description

A recent study conducted on wolves has revealed some fascinating insights into the effects of a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* on their behavior. The research, based on 26 years' worth of data and blood samples from 229 wolves, found that wolves infected with this parasite are 46 times more likely to become pack leaders.

This discovery sheds light on the significant impact of *Toxoplasma gondii* in the wild, which has been largely underestimated in previous studies. The parasite, commonly found in warm-blooded animals including humans, can lead to a potentially fatal disease called toxoplasmosis.

Interestingly, infected animals show altered behaviors, such as increased risk-taking and attraction to predators like cats. In the case of wolves in Yellowstone National Park, those infected with the parasite were more likely to disperse from their packs and display dominant behavior, ultimately becoming pack leaders.

The study highlights the intricate relationship between parasites, individual behavior, and ecosystem dynamics. Researchers emphasize the importance of considering parasite infections in wildlife research to understand their impacts on populations and ecosystems.

Published in *Communications Biology*, this study opens up new avenues for exploring the influence of parasites on animal behavior and group dynamics. This research underscores the crucial role of parasites in shaping the world around us.

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### Vocabulary List:

1. **Parasite** // (noun): An organism that lives in or on another organism and benefits at the host expense.
2. **Toxoplasma gondii** // (noun): A parasitic protozoan known to infect warm-blooded animals including humans.
3. **Behavior** // (noun): The way in which an organism acts or conducts itself especially towards others.
4. **Infection** // (noun): The process by which a foreign organism enters and grows in another organism.
5. **Dominant** // (adjective): Exercising control or influence over others prevailing.
6. **Ecosystem** // (noun): A community of living organisms together with the nonliving components of their environment.

### Vocabulary quizzes



**Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )**

1. Which type of cancer affects the lymphatic system?

- Option: Breast cancer
- Option: Lung cancer
- Option: Lymphoma
- Option: Prostate cancer

2. Which parasite is associated with behavior changes in infected hosts?

- Option: Malaria parasite
- Option: Toxoplasma gondii
- Option: Hookworm
- Option: Tapeworm

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is a natural biological process that occurs in women.

4. The doctor asked about any \_\_\_\_\_ the patient was experiencing.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

5. Toxoplasma gondii is known to influence the \_\_\_\_\_ of its host.

6. Regular \_\_\_\_\_ is essential to track changes in the patient's condition.

**Answer**

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Lymphoma 2. Toxoplasma gondii

**Gap-Fill:** 3. Menopause 4. symptoms

**Matching sentence:** 1. behavior 2. monitoring

**CATEGORY**

1. Health - LEVEL3

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