

Introduction to Parasitology

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1. Introduction

- Parasitology is the study of parasites, their hosts, and the relationships between them.
- A parasite lives on or in a host and benefits at the host's expense.

2. Types of Parasites

- **Endoparasites:** live inside the host, such as intestinal worms.
- **Ectoparasites:** live on the body surface, such as lice and ticks.
- **Protozoa and helminths:** the two major groups of medically important parasites.

3. Host Relationships

- **Definitive host:** harbours the adult or sexual stage of the parasite.
- **Intermediate host:** harbours larval or asexual stages.
- **Vector:** an organism, often an insect, that transmits the parasite.

4. Importance in Health

- Parasites cause major diseases such as malaria, schistosomiasis, and amoebiasis.
- They are a leading cause of illness in tropical and resource-poor regions.

5. Summary

- Parasitology examines parasites, their classification, and host relationships, providing the basis for diagnosing and controlling parasitic disease.