

Chronic Wasting Disease

Information for Connecticut Residents

White-tailed deer



Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

What is Chronic Wasting Disease?

CWD is a neurological disease that attacks the brains of deer, elk and moose, producing small lesions that eventually result in death. Although CWD is similar to other neurological diseases, such as mad cow disease, there is no known relationship between CWD and similar diseases in animals or in people.

Should I be concerned?

No evidence exists that CWD affects humans, and the disease has not been found in New England. However, public health officials advise against consuming meat from CWD infected animals. Wildlife biologists in the northeast are currently conducting surveillance to determine if there is evidence that CWD is spreading.

How does the disease spread?

CWD can spread from animal to animal through direct contact or indirectly through soil and other surfaces where the disease is present. Common modes of transmission are through an animal's saliva or feces. CWD spreads regionally with the movement of captive animals and the improper disposal of animals from a CWD-infected area.

How do I recognize a CWD-infected animal?

In advanced stages of the disease CWD-infected animals may stagger, stand with very poor posture and carry the head and ears in a droopy position. In very late stages of the disease, animals appear emaciated. These symptoms may also be present with other diseases or injuries. See the reverse of this card for precautions deer hunters and others should take in dealing with susceptible animals.

What are the precautions I should take?

Concern over CWD should not limit hunter willingness to take deer during the regulated season. Deer meat is not known to harbor the disease agent, but human contact with other parts of the animal including the brain, spinal cord, spleen, lymph nodes, tonsils and eyes, along with saliva, urine and feces should be avoided.

Hunters should also do the following:

- Avoid shooting, handling, or consuming any animal that is behaving abnormally or appears sick.
- Wear latex or rubber gloves when field-dressing the animal.
- Debone meat from the animal without cutting into the brain or backbone.
- Do not handle or eat the brain, spinal cord, spleen, lymph nodes, tonsils or eyes of the animal.
- Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is complete. Instruments should be placed in a 1:1 bleach/water solution for an hour and left to air dry before reusing.
- To avoid possible introduction of high risk tissues from CWD-infected animals harvested outside of New England, hunters should return with only boned-out meat, antlers with cleaned skull caps, hides without the head, and finished taxidermy mounts. This is mandatory if the deer was taken from a state known to have CWD. For a list of these states, go online to <http://goo.gl/ueYmEy>
- Dispose of carcasses by bringing them to landfills which accept carcasses.
- Call the CT DEEP's 24-hour hotline at 860-424- 3333 to report suspected cases of CWD or other wildlife-related problems.

How can I help in the study of CWD?

Connecticut hunters and others with access to deer carcasses can help in a CWD study being conducted through a joint Federal/State partnership. To donate a deer for testing, email Andrew.Labonte@ct.gov or call the CT DEEP Wildlife Division at 860-642-7239.



<http://goo.gl/ueYmEy>

Visit this website for more detailed information on Chronic Wasting Disease.



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