Learn more about Chronic Wasting Disease

Visit the DNR website for the most up-to-date information on CWD in Minnesota and current surveillance efforts: www.mndnr.gov/cwd

- CDC: www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd
- CWD Alliance: cwd-info.org

Harvest a trophy deer? There are options!

Check online to see if your taxidermist is participating in our CWD sampling efforts

If yes:
Great! Just ensure they plan to submit your sample to DNR for testing.

If not:
1. When you drop off your deer with your taxidermist, explain that you are still required to submit a mandatory sample.
2. Have your taxidermist keep your caped-out deer head when they are finished—make sure you get your same deer head back. Once the head is removed from the cape, it should be kept frozen until it is submitted.
3. Place your frozen deer head in a plastic bag and include identifying information for yourself: your name, phone number, and MNDNR number.
4. Locate your nearest Area Wildlife Office and drop-off the caped-out head during normal business hours.

Chronic Wasting Disease in Minnesota
- Information for Hunters -

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Where can I check my test results?

Visit mndnr.gov/cwdcheck

No internet access? Call 1-888-646-6367 from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays or 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

Use your nine-digit MNDNR number to look-up your individual results

- For hunters outside of the CWD Management Zone (DPA 603), results should be available within 2-3 weeks.
- For hunters within DPA 603, test results are expedited due to carcass-movement restrictions. Test results from DPA 603 should be available within 4-5 business days.

If CWD is found in a submitted deer, the hunter will be immediately notified by phone by a DNR official.

What do we know about CWD in Minnesota?

- MNDNR has tested over 60,000 wild deer in Minnesota since 2002.
- Within Minnesota, there have been a total of 18 positive wild deer
  - 2010 - 1 wild deer in Olmsted county.
  - 2016-2017 - 17 wild deer in Fillmore county.
- Since 2002, there have been 8 CWD-positive deer farms in Minnesota, which prompted surveillance efforts in wild deer across the state.
- Ongoing discovery of CWD in wild deer in bordering states, northeast Iowa as well as southern and western Wisconsin, has resulted in increased surveillance efforts in wild deer for southeast MN in recent years.

Increased restrictions on carcass movements, deer feeding, and surveillance in areas of concern can help keep Minnesota’s deer herd healthy.

What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

- CWD is a central nervous system disease found in cervids — deer, elk, moose, reindeer, and caribou.
- Prions, the abnormal proteins that cause the disease, are highly resistant to disinfectants, heat, or freezing - cooking will not kill this disease.
- It affects the brain of the infected animal and is always fatal. There is no vaccine or treatment for CWD.
- CWD is a slow moving disease with a 1.5 - 3 year incubation period.
- CWD is spread among animals through direct contact with infected individual. It is shed through saliva, urine, blood, feces, antler velvet, carcass parts of an infected animal, or infected soil.
- Generally older animals, and males in particular, have the highest infection risk.

What are the signs in deer?

Throughout most of the infection, the animal appears healthy. Clinical signs may not appear for several years after initial exposure and may include:

- Weight loss; emaciation
- Excessive drooling and salivation
- Loss of fear of humans
- Loss of body control, tremors, or staggering
- Drooping head or ears
- Apparent confusion

Even if it appears healthy, a CWD-infected animal is spreading the disease.

Is it safe to eat?

While there is no evidence that humans can contract CWD, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends testing your deer for CWD. CDC recommends not eating meat from a known positive animal.

For more information, please visit the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd

Recommendations for the proper handling of deer:

- Wear rubber gloves while processing or butchering your deer.
- Bone out meat from your animal.
- Minimize handling of brain and spinal tissue.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling the carcass.
- Avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, and lymph nodes.
- Consider having your deer processed and wrapped individually.
- To prevent wanton waste, process and store your deer as you normally would.

It is the hunter’s choice to consume venison prior to receiving test results.