What can I do to help?

The DNR routinely conducts surveillance when there is a risk of the disease spreading by known positive deer in an area – in wild or farmed deer. We need your help to succeed. So, please:

• Participate in surveillance efforts during hunting seasons when they occur in your area.
• Comply with bans on recreational deer feeding and use of attractants (this includes salt and mineral licks) where they exist.
• Report sick deer to your local conservation officer or area wildlife office.
• Be aware of carcass-import restrictions. Whole carcasses of deer, elk, moose, or caribou cannot be brought into Minnesota.
• Learn more about CWD in the Minnesota hunting regulations handbook or online at mndnr.gov/cwd
In Minnesota, chronic wasting disease (CWD) was first discovered on an elk farm in 2002 and the first wild deer was discovered in 2010. CWD is a challenge to manage because:

- This always fatal neurologic disease develops slowly. By the time a deer looks sick – over many months to several years – it may have infected others.
- Prions, the abnormal proteins that cause the disease, are highly resistant to disinfectants, heat, or freezing - cooking will not kill this disease.
- There is currently no vaccine or treatment for this disease.
- Healthy deer can get CWD through direct contact with an infected deer’s saliva, urine, blood, feces, antler velvet or carcass. Even soil can become contaminated and be a source of infection.

**What to know before you hunt**

- Review new information in the hunting regulations handbook to determine if CWD surveillance is occurring where you hunt. If you harvest a deer during mandatory sampling efforts, register your deer then bring it to a sampling station.
- CWD test results will be posted on-line. If your deer tests positive you will be notified immediately by phone.
- If you are hunting deer, elk, moose, or caribou out-of-state, be aware that these whole carcasses are prohibited from entering Minnesota. Details about carcass-import restrictions can be found in the regulations handbook.
- Your compliance with CWD surveillance efforts is critical. Keeping our deer herd healthy guarantees this valuable resource for future generations.

**Long-term impacts for Minnesota**

Once established on the landscape, CWD has the potential to significantly reduce deer numbers. This could negatively impact hunting, wildlife watching and those who benefit economically from a healthy deer population.

Minnesota deer hunting generates nearly $500 million of economic activity each year. It is in Minnesota’s best interest to keep deer healthy for future generations.

**Is venison safe to eat?**

While there is no evidence that humans can contract CWD, the Centers 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: [cdc.gov/prions/cwd](http://cdc.gov/prions/cwd)

**Be vigilant for signs of prions**

Though diseased deer can appear healthy, the clinical signs of a CWD-positive deer include:

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

Report sick deer to your local conservation officer or DNR Area Wildlife Office.