

Chronic Wasting Disease is a prion disease that can infect any member of the deer family. It is characterized by loss of body condition, increased salivation, and behavioural abnormalities such as incoordination. The disease is progressive and always fatal. There is no evidence this disease infects humans.

In Alberta, in the wild, it is found only in mule deer and white-tailed deer in limited areas along the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. The rate of infection of CWD in deer in Alberta is extremely low and the chances of harvesting an infected deer are even lower.

The prions, the disease-causing agents, concentrate where there is a lot of nerve tissue, such as in the brain, spinal cord and eyes, as well as in lymph nodes and spleen. While there is no evidence showing that transport of these tissues leads to new infections, additional precautions may limit the potential for spread of CWD further into or within Alberta.

#### Further Information

Updated Chronic Wasting Disease information is available at any Fish and Wildlife office of Sustainable Resource Development or at [www.srd.alberta.ca/fishwildlife/livingwith/diseases](http://www.srd.alberta.ca/fishwildlife/livingwith/diseases)

The CWD Alliance has additional, reliable information for hunters, as well as links to many state and provincial wildlife agency Chronic Wasting Disease webpages.

[www.cwd-info.org/index.php](http://www.cwd-info.org/index.php)

ISBN No. 978-0-7785-8880-1 (Printed Version)  
ISBN No. 978-0-7785-8879-5 (Online Version)  
Pub No. 1/410  
Revised October 2009

**Government  
of Alberta** ■

# CWD

## Guidelines in CWD Risk Areas

## Deer Carcass Transportation and Handling





Sustainable Resource Development recommends the following guidelines to minimize moving potentially infectious material. Note that the guidelines are strictly a deer disease control measure.

**Deer heads collected along the Alberta/Saskatchewan border in At Risk Wildlife Management Units MUST be submitted for mandatory testing. They can be dropped off at any Fish and Wildlife office or at 24-hr freezers scattered in eastern Alberta. Visit one of our offices or [www.srd.alberta.ca](http://www.srd.alberta.ca) for the current freezer locations and the Wildlife Management Units considered “At Risk” for CWD. Any unit designated as mandatory head submission is considered “At Risk”.**

## Carcass Transportation

### Guidelines for transporting hunter-killed deer and elk OUT OF CWD At Risk areas within Alberta

To contain the potential spread of CWD, only the following carcass parts may be transported out of At Risk Wildlife Management Units.

- Quarters or portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached (ensure hind quarter with tag attached also has evidence of sex and species).
- Boned-out meat (ensure the quarter with tag attached and evidence of sex and species does not get boned out).
- Processed meat (commercially cut and wrapped).
- Heads that will be submitted to a Fish and Wildlife office outside the CWD At Risk area. It is MANDATORY that all deer heads from deer harvested within the At Risk areas be submitted for CWD testing. (Check the *Alberta Guide To Hunting Regulations 2009* for office hours.)

- Cleaned skull caps with antlers attached (no meat or tissue attached).
- Antlers with no meat or tissue attached.
- Hides with no heads attached.
- Finished taxidermy heads.

**Note:** Your voluntary participation in carcass transportation is greatly appreciated.

### Guidelines for transporting hunter-killed deer and elk INTO Alberta from areas where CWD is known to occur

There currently is no legislated restriction on the transport of hunter-killed cervid carcasses into Alberta. However, hunters are asked to be aware of the CWD status of the area/jurisdiction where they are hunting and to abide by the recommendations contained herein for carcass transportation.

Hunters are reminded to check local provincial or state authority guidelines for additional restrictions on transport of hunter-killed cervids in other jurisdictions.

## Carcass Handling

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control advise that the human health risks from CWD, if any exist at all, are extremely low. There is no evidence that CWD can infect humans and mounting evidence that it is unlikely. No cases of human neurologic conditions have been associated with CWD.

However, in an effort to better inform hunters, harvesting deer and elk in WMUs where CWD is known to occur, the following guidelines are offered.

### General precautions

Do not eat any harvested big game animal that appears to be sick. If you harvest a sick animal, contact the nearest Fish and Wildlife office to report

the incident. Note that once harvested, you must legally tag the animal and salvage usable meat. If you are concerned about the meat or some part of the animal, take it to a Fish and Wildlife office for examination.

Do not eat the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils, pancreas or lymph nodes.

Wash hands and knives thoroughly after field dressing your animal.

### Basic butchering guidelines to consider

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- Minimize contact with the brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph nodes (grey/green lumps of tissue next to organs or in fat and membranes).
- Remove all internal organs and minimize your contact with those parts and all central nervous system tissue.
- Avoid cutting through bones. You may wish to consider boning out the meat.
- Avoid meat contaminated with brain matter or gut contents.
- Do not cut through the spinal column except to remove the head. Use a knife for this specific purpose. If you harvest a deer in the Alberta/Saskatchewan border area, place the head in a plastic bag, freeze it as soon as possible, and drop it off at any Fish and Wildlife office or one of the 24-hr freezers scattered throughout the eastern border region. Remember to label the head with complete information about the hunter and the deer. Please use the labels provided at the freezers or offices. **Fill out BOTH sides of the label.**
- Clean residue from knives and other equipment with a 50 per cent solution of household bleach and water.