

FACT SHEET

CWD across the Métis Homeland (Chronic Wasting Disease)



TRANSMISSION

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is caused by infectious proteins, called prions, that affects the central nervous system of cervids (deer, moose, elk, caribou). CWD is shed through bodily fluids (saliva, urine, feces) of infected animals and can remain in the soils and on other materials. CWD is transmitted either through contact by animals or contact with contaminated environment. Individual animals can be infected for years before showing signs

Transmission from cervids to humans has not been documented to date, however it has been passed to non-human primates. CWD is closely related to the virus that caused Mad Cow Disease, which has been known to cause disease in humans. For safety reasons, Health Canada and the World Health Organization recommend the meat of infected animals not be eaten.

Deer, elk, moose and caribou are safe to eat, and most body parts are safe to use. If the animal looks or acts sick, has died of unknown causes or has tested positive for CWD, do not handle or eat.



SAFETY WHEN HUNTING IN AREAS WITH CWD

- Check with provincial regional staff to see if CWD is prevalent in the area you're hunting. If it is, get animals tested (see below)
- Pay attention to the appearance and behaviour of the animal being hunted. Do not harvest an animal that appears sick.
- When dressing an animal, avoid handling or eating the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes
- Avoid handling head and brain if tanning hide.
- Wash hands and tools with soap and water after completing field dressing.
- Disposal of carcass is important to reduce the spread of CWD. Either dispose in the same area harvested or check with province to see if there are safe disposal facilities.

SIGNS OF A SICK ANIMAL

Signs of Chronic wasting disease:

- Weak
- Tremors, wide stance, drowsiness
- Thin
- Lack of coordination
- Excessive Salivating
- Paralysis
- Drinking lots
- Separation from other animals in herd

WHERE TO TEST AND HOW TO DISPOSE OF CARCASS

If you have harvested in areas with CWD present, it is important to test your animal for health and tracking purposes. Get your animal tested at the following locations:

Alberta: In Alberta, some areas have mandatory testing, voluntary in others.





Testing: Head submission are in freezer locations throughout province. Find process and locations here:

<https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease.aspx> - Information for Hunters

Carcass Disposal: Leave the carcass at the kill site. If carcass is transported burn, bury or dispose of the remains in a landfill.

Saskatchewan: All testing is voluntary.

Testing: Head submission at Ministry of Environment field offices, provincial park offices or self-service drop-off locations. Locations found here:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildlife-issues/fish-and-wildlife-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/getting-your-animal-tested>

Carcass Disposal: Field dress and debone near the harvest location or dispose at CWD disposal site or an appropriate landfill. Locations found here:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildlife-issues/fish-and-wildlife-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/carcass-disposal-options>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:

Government of Canada Chronic Wasting Disease and traditional foods

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1571687660394/1571687748442>

Government of Canada Chronic Wasting Disease: what hunters should know

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/cwd/what-hunters-should-know/eng/1601393370403/1601393370841>

Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative Chronic Wasting Disease

http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/chronic_wasting_disease.php

Government of Saskatchewan Overview of Chronic Wasting Disease in Saskatchewan

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildlife-issues/fish-and-wildlife-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease>

Government of Alberta Chronic Wasting Disease – Information for Hunters

<https://www.alberta.ca/chronic-wasting-disease.aspx>

