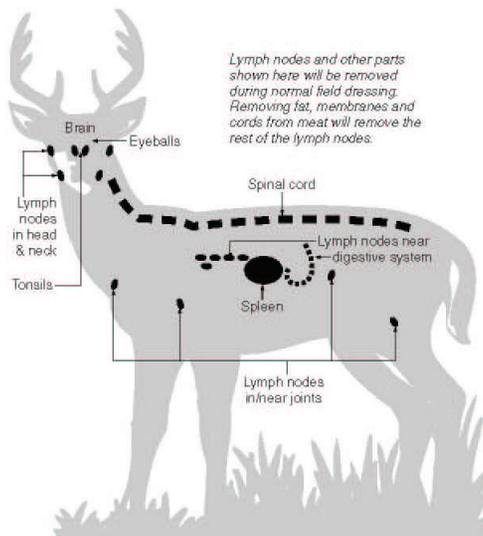


## General Chronic Wasting Disease Information

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) belongs to a family of infectious diseases, called transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), which alter the morphology of the central nervous system, resulting in a “sponge-like” appearance of this tissue. Chronic wasting disease only affects deer, elk, and moose. The etiological agent of CWD is an infectious protein, called a prion. Incubation time of the disease, from infection to clinical signs, can range from 1.5 to nearly 3 years. Clinical signs are non-specific and may include a loss of body condition and weight, excessive salivation, ataxia, and behavioral changes. There is no known treatment or vaccine for the disease and it is always fatal.

There is no evidence that CWD in the natural environment poses a risk to humans or livestock. Still, precautions should be taken. Hunters are advised not to eat meat from animals known to be infected, and common sense precautions are advised when field dressing and processing meat.



## Chronic Wasting Disease Information for Hunters

The Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization state that there is no scientific evidence that CWD causes human illness; however, precautions should be taken to minimize exposure.

- Do not shoot, handle, or consume any animal that is acting abnormally or appears to be sick.
- Contact your local DNR office or the general DNR information line at 1-888-646-6367 if the animal appears sick.
- Wear latex or rubber gloves when field dressing your deer. Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed.
- Bone out the meat from your animal. Don't saw through bone, and avoid cutting through the brain or spinal cord (backbone).
- Minimize handling of brain and spinal tissue.
- Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed.
- Avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes. Normal field dressing coupled with boning out a carcass will remove most, if not all, of these body parts.
- Avoid consuming the meat from any animal that tests positive for the disease.
- If you have your deer or elk commercially processed, request that your animal is processed individually, without meat from other animals being added to meat from your animal

Website addresses for more information:

Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources: [www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov)  
 Minnesota Deer Hunters Association: [www.mndeerhunters.com](http://www.mndeerhunters.com)  
 Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture: [www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us)  
 University of Minnesota Extension: [www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)  
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/cwd/>  
 USDA, WS: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/cwd/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/cwd/)  
 CWD Alliance: [www.cwd-info.org](http://www.cwd-info.org)

## “Field to Fork”

### Field Dressing Deer with Food Safety in Mind



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**Extension**  
 SERVICE



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE**  
 FROM THE FARM TO YOUR FAMILY

## Proper Field Dressing

Photos courtesy of Digital Bucket

Improper handling of the deer can contaminate the carcass with potentially harmful bacteria and compromise food safety and quality. By implementing a few precautionary measures during field dressing, the hunter can help ensure the final product is fit to consume.

1. Place the deer on its back and spread the hind legs. Support the carcass in this position by using rocks or sticks. **All hunters should wear gloves!!**



2. Cut along the midline of the belly from the breastbone to the anus. Avoid cutting into the intestines and stomach by turning the knife blade up during the cutting process. Slowly remove the skin from the incision.



3. Cut through the sternum to open the body cavity surrounding the lungs and heart.



4. After opening the body cavity, reach inside and begin cutting the diaphragm, lungs, and heart away from the body wall. Remove the internal organs all in one step. Take care to avoid puncturing or tearing the stomach and intestines during this process.



5. To promote cooling of the carcass, place a stick between the ribs to prop open the body cavity and allow airflow.



## Transportation and Processing

- Drag the deer with the back or side down to minimize contamination of the meat. If possible, drag the deer on a tarp or use a deer cart.
- Keep the carcass cool during transport to the locker plant.
- Transport the carcass to the locker plant as soon as possible. If the carcass cannot be taken directly to the plant after harvest, it must be stored at a temperature of less than 41° F.
- Rinse the carcass with cold water prior to storage to remove debris and bacterial contamination.
- When transporting the deer in a vehicle, pack the body cavity with ice to promote additional cooling.
- Allow for adequate air circulation around the carcass and keep it out of direct sunlight and warm temperatures during transportation and storage.

**Proper refrigeration and handling is necessary to prevent decomposition of the carcass and minimize the growth of potentially harmful bacteria. This will reduce the risk of food-borne illness due to consumption of contaminated meat.**