

# UW Health: Offers gun deer hunting safety reminders

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MADISON, Wis. – Gun deer hunting season begins Saturday, Nov. 20, in Wisconsin and it is a special tradition for many Wisconsin hunters, but it is important to stay safe in the woods.

This year's hunting season can be a fun experience for those who choose to participate, especially compared to 2020 given the widespread availability of the vaccine this year, but there are still important safety reminders to keep in mind when it comes to safety, according to Dr. Jeff Pothof, emergency medicine physician, chief quality officer, UW Health, and associate professor of emergency medicine, UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

“We do still want to take precautions when it relates to COVID-19 and make sure we are mindful of tree stand safety, firearm safety and our physical conditioning,” he said. “If we do those things, I think Wisconsin hunters can have a safe, successful season.”

Pothof recommends the following safety tips.

## **COVID-19 reminders**

- The most important thing you can do before going to deer camp is to get vaccinated, or get a booster shot, if eligible.
- If unvaccinated, avoid being in close proximity with others and wear a mask to reduce your risk when indoors with others.
- If you are sick or having symptoms like a cough, muscle aches, or a fever, please stay home.
- If a group is sharing a hunting cabin, small groups of 10 people or fewer who

are all vaccinated is safest.

## Safety reminders

- **Tree stands:** It is important to make sure the stand is structurally sound, but most importantly every hunter needs to wear a safety harness that keeps them connected to the tree at all times to avoid serious injury from falls.
- **Gun safety:** Keep gun safety rules in mind. Most years, there are accidental shootings, where a hunter is accidentally shot by a fellow hunter. Clearly identify your target and what is behind it. Never shoot at movement in the brush and never shoot over the crest of a hill or toward buildings. It is also important to unload the round in the chamber while climbing in and out of your tree stand. Use a rope to bring the unloaded gun up once you are safely in the stand.
- **Current health:** Be mindful of your physical conditioning. Each year, hunters have heart attacks in the woods because they exert themselves too much through difficult terrain like wetlands, bluffs, and tall grass when they are not in the physical health to do so.

Gun deer season in Wisconsin runs from Nov. 20-28.

A record interview with Pothof is available. He is also available for interviews.