

DNR: Recommends testing deer for CWD before consuming venison

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages hunters to get their deer tested for [chronic wasting disease \(CWD\)](#) before consuming venison.

As a precaution, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization recommend against consuming meat from deer that test positive for the disease. Because infected deer can look healthy, DHS encourages testing for the disease regardless of your harvested deer's physical condition, especially in [areas where CWD is known to be present](#).

CWD is an always-fatal contagious neurological disease that affects the nervous system of deer, elk, moose and caribou. The disease can spread through contact with an infected animal's saliva, urine or feces. It can also spread indirectly through exposure to a contaminated environment. CWD prions are extremely resilient and can stay in the soil for a long time, making containment of an affected area a challenge.

CWD Testing Made Easy

The DNR has made CWD testing easy and accessible to every hunter in the state by offering free testing and various options to make the sample drop-off process fast and convenient. By having deer tested, hunters help protect the state's deer herd by providing the DNR important data needed to understand where CWD exists on the landscape to help slow the spread.

Where To Test For CWD

The DNR offers four easy ways to submit a sample:

1. **Self-service kiosks open 24/7.** Kiosks have supplies for hunters to drop off their adult deer's head with 5 inches of neck attached for testing. This is a great option for antlerless deer or any deer that has already been skull-capped or caped out by a taxidermist. Hunters can find a location near them by checking the [DNR's CWD sampling webpage](#).
2. **In-person with cooperating meat processors, taxidermists and other businesses.** This is a great option for hunters with a deer they intend to mount. If your taxidermist is not a cooperator, ask for the caped-out head back so you can drop it off at a kiosk. Meat processors/other businesses can collect the deer head for sampling later or remove the lymph nodes at the time of drop-off. Use the [interactive map](#) on the DNR's webpage to find locations near you.
3. **At-home lymph node sampling.** These kits are available for those interested in collecting their own CWD sample and for hunters who are unable to stop by a kiosk or cooperator within a day or two of harvesting a deer. Hunters can extract the retropharyngeal lymph nodes using an instruction kit provided by the DNR or picked up at a self-serve kiosk and return them to the DNR or a kiosk for testing.
4. **By appointment with local DNR staff.** This is a good option for hunters who want to have a European mount done. Hunters can contact their local wildlife management staff to schedule an in-person appointment.

When submitting a sample for testing, try the DNR's online CWD form to complete the process. Hunters can access the form in their [Go Wild](#) harvest history after registering their deer.

The online form automatically fills in your name, contact information, customer ID number and harvest registration number and includes an interactive map to drop a pin on your harvest location.

CWD testing, proper carcass disposal and following baiting and feeding regulations are three key ways to slow the spread. The DNR's [guide to slowing the spread of CWD](#) provides even more ways hunters can help.