

Deer Processing Guide for Deer Harvested in Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Zone or other CWD Positive Areas

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With Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) being detected within Kentucky's border in December of 2023, there is a need to understand precautions you can take while field dressing and processing harvested deer to help ensure the meat remains safe for consumption. Below are some recommendations that you can follow to help ensure your harvested meat is safe for consumption. These are especially important if you harvest the deer within either of the Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Zones in Kentucky.



Get your deer tested if it was harvested within a known CWD area or within any CWD monitoring zone (testing location information below).

- Do not consume animal until testing results are known
- If the animal was harvested in a county bordering the CWD monitoring zone it may be advantageous to get it tested
- Do not shoot, handle, or consume any animal that is acting abnormally or appears sick
- If the CWD test comes back positive it is advised that you do not consume the meat
- Refer to KAR 2:095 Importation of Cervid Carcasses and Parts for information on bringing Cervid Carcasses into Kentucky from known CWD positive states Safety Tips
- Always wear rubber gloves while field dressing or processing the animal to avoid any unnecessary contact
- Do not consume brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, or lymph nodes of harvested animals
- Avoid cutting any part of the neck, spinal cord, spleen, or intestines as it is believed CWD prions are concentrated in these areas
- Hang animal head down to allow fluid from brain and spine to drain to the ground and avoid the meat
- Bone out meat and avoid cutting or sawing through any bones, especially the spinal cord
- Clean butchering instruments, cutting boards, or any other items used in processing by soaking them in a 40% solution of household bleach to inactivate prions (items need to be completely clean of any tissue or organic matter)
- If you have meat commercially processed request the animal is processed individually
- Label all package meat with a deer ID number making it easier to determine where the meat came from in case you have a CWD positive deer

Relevant Deer Processing Information:

Link to Video on Gutless Deer Processing Method: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaMUpCIIqew>

Links to Relevant CWD Information Chronic Wasting Disease Information:

<https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Chronic-Wasting-Disease.aspx>

Testing Locations and Information:

<https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Chronic-Wasting-Disease.aspx#freezers>

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