

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

A REAL THREAT



A good mind. A good heart. A strong fire.

What is CWD?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CDW) is a transmissible and always fatal neurological disease of deer and elk that produces small lesions in the brain of the infected animal. It is characterized by loss of body condition, behavioral abnormalities, and death. It can take as long as two years before an infected animal shows outward signs of the disease. It is not treatable, and there is no known cure. This makes it a **real** and **undeniable** threat to animal and herd health.

Causes

Infectious agents of CWD are neither bacteria nor viruses, but are an agent known as a prion. Prions are infectious proteins that are difficult to destroy.

Transmission

Transmission between animals is hypothesized to occur through contact with bodily fluids containing prions including blood, urine, feces, and saliva and through soil, water, or food contaminated with fluids.

Testing

CWD is confirmed via the testing of a lymph node sample collected from the neck of a deer and sent to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Testing results are typically received within two weeks.

Is there a concern for public health?

To date, there have been no reported cases of CWD infection in people. However, some animal studies suggest CWD poses a risk to certain types of non-human primates, like monkeys, that eat meat from CWD-infected animals or come in contact with brain or body fluids from infected deer or elk. These studies raise concerns that there may also be a risk to people. Since 1997, the World Health Organization has recommended that it is important to keep the agents of all known prion diseases from entering the human food chain. Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control advise that venison or other cervid meats not be consumed if there is a positive test for CWD.

Occurrence in Wisconsin

Positive test results for CWD in both captive and wild deer have been reported in 56 counties in Wisconsin to date.

What can I do?

The Center for Disease Control recommends the following field dressing practices for prevention of CWD: Wear rubber gloves, limit contact with brain and spinal cord, and designate only non-household knives for field dressing. If commercial processing is used, ask for individual processing.

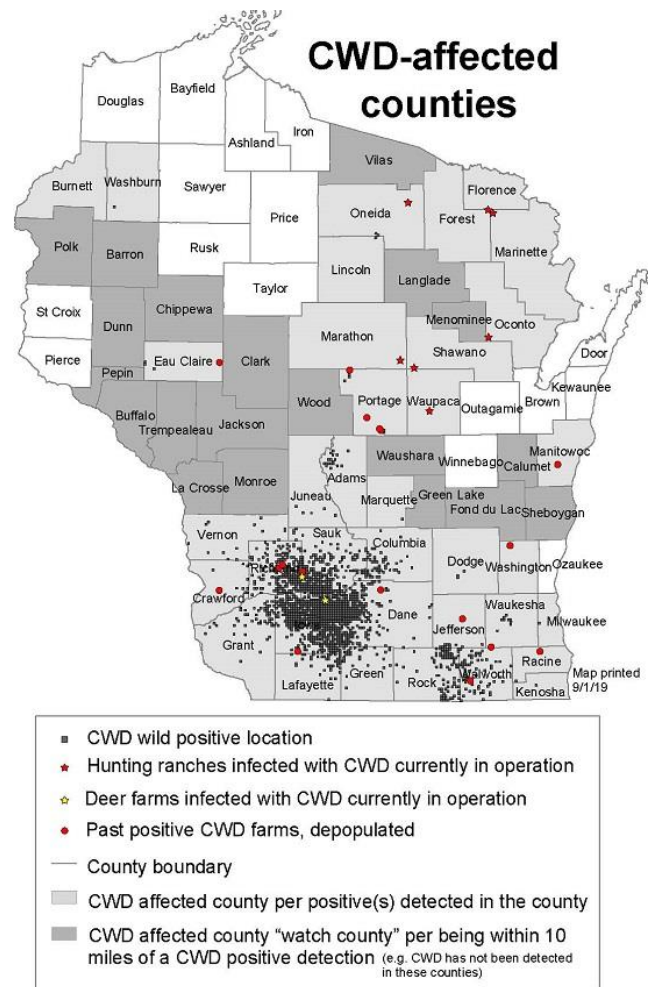
Don't use animal attractants such as grain, other animal feed, or lures to concentrate animals for the purpose of improving your success hunting or observing animals. It's reasonable to assume that any factor that causes animals to come into contact with each other at a higher frequency, a higher density, and a prolonged period of time increases the probability that CWD will be transmitted.

Decomposing carcasses infected with CWD can serve as reservoirs of prions, which can contaminate soil and water. **To help prevent spread of CWD, this hunting season Oneida Conservation will be providing a dumpster at the Conservation field office, located at N8047 County Rd U, Oneida, WI 54155, for disposal of deer carcasses.**

Sources

<https://www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html>

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/regulations.html>



Source: Wisconsin DNR, 2019, <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/regulations.html>