

# CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of the brain that can affect members of the deer family, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, elk and caribou. It is caused by an abnormal prion – a tiny protein particle – that can be transmitted from one animal to another or through contaminated soil or water. There is currently no treatment or vaccine.



**CWD has NOT been detected in any wildlife species in the NWT or in caribou anywhere in North America.**

Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) is working with hunters and neighbouring jurisdictions to prevent the spread of CWD into the NWT.

## Signs and Symptoms

Animals can be infected with CWD for years before they exhibit signs of the disease.

Symptoms may include:

- drastic weight loss (wasting)
- difficulty walking
- drooling
- excessive thirst or urination
- lack of fear of people

**If you see an animal that is acting strangely or appears sick, report it to your local ENR office.**

## CWD and Human Health

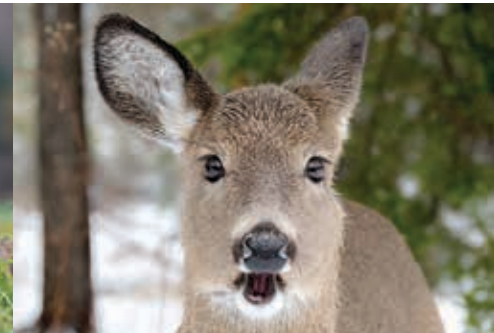
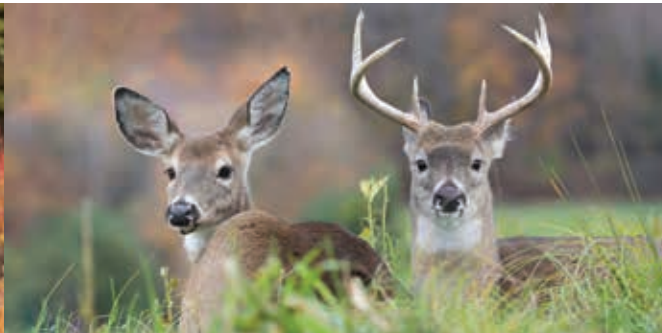
There is no direct scientific evidence to suggest CWD may be transmitted to humans. However, precautions should be taken when eating and handling all deer, moose, elk and caribou harvested in areas known to have CWD. Meat and organs from an animal that is behaving abnormally, looks sick or has tested positive for CWD should not be eaten. Use gloves when handling the carcass and thoroughly wash your hands, knives and other equipment.

## Taking Action

ENR is working closely with other federal and provincial wildlife agencies to prevent the introduction of CWD to the NWT and ensure northerners can continue to harvest and enjoy healthy traditional foods.

These measures include:

- Regulations to prohibit the import of live deer and high risk deer parts into the NWT
- Working with hunters to test samples from NWT deer, moose and caribou
- Monitoring wildlife health in the NWT together with communities, co-management partners and other agencies
- Providing information on the signs and symptoms of CWD to hunters



## You Can Help!

**Test deer species harvested in Alberta or Saskatchewan.** Under the *Wildlife Act*, hunters who shoot deer, moose, elk or caribou more than 100 km from the NWT border must have animals tested for CWD and provide proof the animal does not have the disease before bringing it into the NWT. Only boneless meat does not require testing.

**Take part in ENR sampling programs to monitor for CWD.** Contact your nearest ENR office to drop off intact heads from white-tailed or mule deer harvested in the NWT. Samples from moose, elk and caribou harvested in the southern NWT may also be submitted for CWD testing.

**Notify ENR if you see a sick deer, moose, elk or caribou.**  
Contact your local or regional ENR office or email [WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca).

