

DEER CWD – Questions and Answers

What is CWD – Chronic Wasting Disease?

CWD is a neurological (brain and nervous system) disease of the deer family known to occur in limited geographical locations in North America and Europe. The disease belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). These diseases are caused by an abnormal form of a protein called a prion. There is no practical test of live animals to detect CWD, and there is no known treatment or vaccine.

How is it spread?

It is thought that the most common mode of transmission from an infected animal is via saliva, feces, urine and possibly other body secretions. The infectious prion persists in the environment. There is evidence that people moving live infected animals have spread the disease over long distances.

Is it dangerous to humans?

There currently is no convincing evidence that the agent of CWD affects humans. However, public health officials recommend that human exposure to the CWD agent be avoided as they continue to research the disease. This includes not eating meat from known infected animals or animals that appear sick.

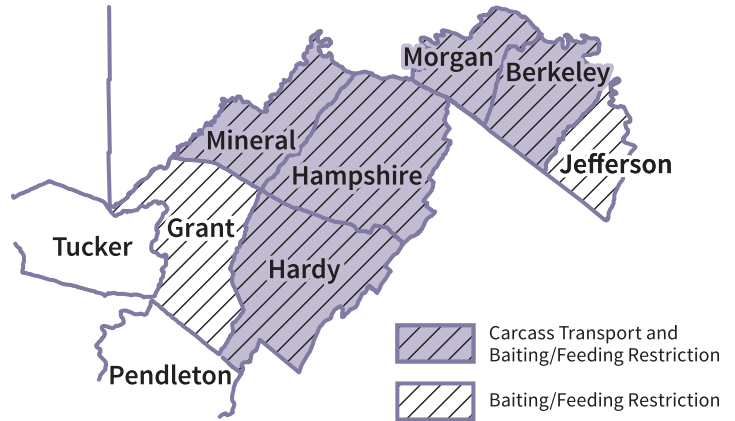
Where has it been found?

As of June 2018, CWD has been detected in free-ranging deer and elk in portions of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada. In addition, CWD has been found in captive/farmed elk and white-tailed deer in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, and Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada.

In West Virginia, CWD has been found in 349 white-tailed deer. Testing of road-kill deer in all WV counties has been continuous since 2002. The WVDNR, Wildlife Resources Section, in cooperation with various USDA certified laboratories has tested over 17,737 deer from West Virginia for CWD. As of June 2018, 340 deer from Hampshire County, six from Hardy County, two from Berkeley County and one from Mineral County are the only animals found thus far to have the abnormal prion associated with CWD.

What is being done about CWD in WV?

CWD in West Virginia represents a significant threat to the state's white-tailed deer. The disease does not create an immediate widespread die-off of deer, but if allowed to spread, will cause long-term damage to the herd. The DNR is taking action to gather more information on the prevalence and distribution of the disease in the area surrounding all known infected deer. The DNR also discourages supplemental feeding and baiting of deer statewide, bans these practices on public land for a portion of the year, and also bans these practices anytime in Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral and Morgan counties. In addition there are restrictions on the disposal and transport of deer carcasses from Berkeley, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Morgan counties within the WV containment area (see WV CWD containment area) and any deer brought into WV from portions of MD, PA and VA where CWD has been detected. There are no proven solutions to combating CWD once present in free-ranging deer. Thus, future management actions will be adaptive and based on the findings of current and future surveillance.



West Virginia's Chronic Wasting Disease Containment Area

Includes all of Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral and Morgan counties (cross hatch counties above). It is **illegal to bait or feed deer** any time in the "Containment Area" (see baiting and feeding regulations on page 13). In addition, hunters are **prohibited from transporting dead deer** or their parts beyond the boundary of **Berkeley, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, and Morgan counties** (shaded counties above) within the containment area except for the following: meat that has been boned out, quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached, cleaned hide with no head attached, clean skull plate (no meat or tissue attached) with antlers attached, antlers with no meat or tissue attached, and finished taxidermy mounts. Hunters may transport cervid carcasses that were not killed inside the containment area through the containment area.

What can hunters do?

- If you kill or observe a severely emaciated (very skinny) deer or a deer that is obviously sick, or a deer with an ear tag, contact the WV DNR Wildlife Resources Section office nearest you.
- Do not feed or bait deer. These practices concentrate deer, increase the likelihood of spread of any disease present in the deer herd, and may introduce foreign contaminants via the feed or bait.
- Harvest adequate numbers of antlerless deer to maintain deer populations in balance with natural food supplies. A deer population in balance with available habitat is healthier and less likely to spread diseases.
- Avoid using natural deer urine based lures in the environment and do not place these urine lures on the ground or on vegetation where deer can reach them.
- If you hunt deer or elk out of state bring back only boned out meat or quarters and thoroughly cleaned skull plates and antlers. **This applies to all CWD-positive states, except for VA, MD, OH and PA where it applies only to the state designated CWD containment area or CWD disease management areas.**
- **If you hunt in Berkeley, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, or Morgan counties, see special regulations regarding carcass transport and disposal. Also, please cooperate with WVDNR requests for information and samples needed for CWD testing (see page 12 for testing locations).**
- If you kill a cervid (deer, elk, etc.) out of state in a fenced enclosure only boned out meat or quarters and thoroughly cleaned skull plates and antlers may be transported into the state.