

- The CFIA has an eradication policy for CWD that requires the destruction of all exposed farmed cervids, including any exposed cervid moved from the infected premises within the last 36 months. Cervids that have been off infected premises for more than 36 and less than 60 months are kept under surveillance. *The Health of Animals Act* provides compensation for animals destroyed and the disposal costs.
- The Manitoba Wildlife Federation and the Manitoba Big Game Trophy Association are supportive of these initiatives and are encouraging their members to collect and submit deer and elk samples.

#### For more information contact:

Manitoba Conservation  
Ph.: 204-945-6784  
Toll-free: 1-800-214-6497  
[www.gov.mb.ca/cwd](http://www.gov.mb.ca/cwd)

Manitoba Agriculture and Food  
[www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture)

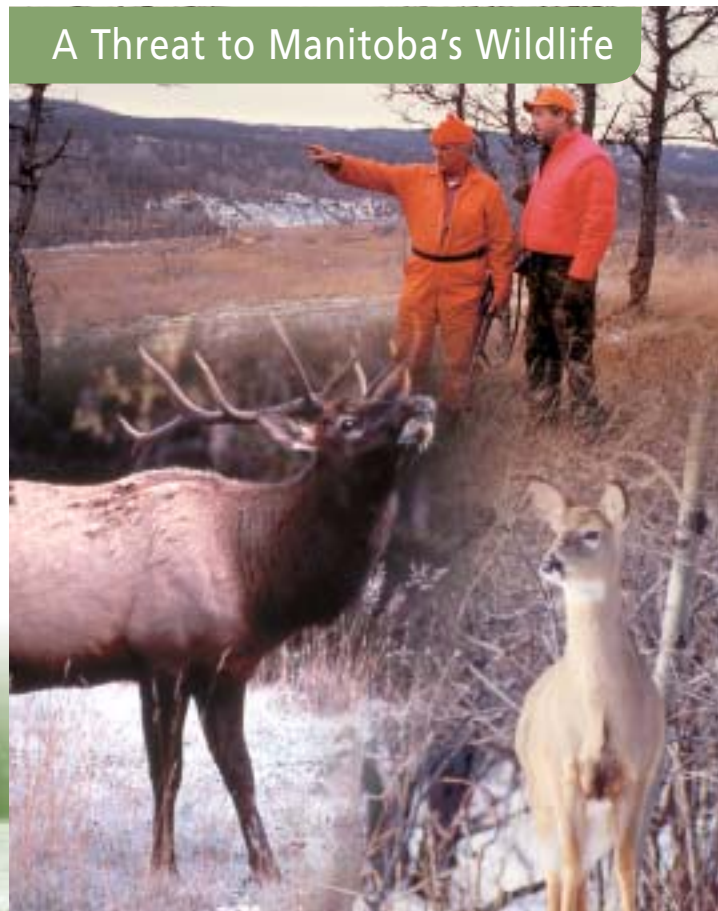
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)  
(Search keywords: chronic wasting disease)

Manitoba Wildlife Federation  
[www.mwf.mb.ca/dealingCWD.htm](http://www.mwf.mb.ca/dealingCWD.htm)

Manitoba Big Game Trophy Association  
[www.mbgta.org](http://www.mbgta.org)

# Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

## A Threat to Manitoba's Wildlife



## What is CWD?

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurologic disease of deer and elk. This disease belongs to a group of diseases called transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). TSEs tend to be species specific and scientists believe most are not naturally transmissible between different species.

## What other similar diseases are TSEs?

In addition to CWD, other animal TSEs include:

- scrapie in domestic sheep
- bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease in cattle
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) a human disease found worldwide

## What are the symptoms in deer and elk?

Infected deer and elk show abnormal behaviour accompanied by progressive weight loss. In latter stages of the disease, affected animals show signs of extreme weight loss, repetitive behaviour, drowsiness, lack of co-ordination, drooping head and ears, trembling, drooling, and increased drinking and urination.

## Can CWD be transmitted to humans?

There is no known case of humans being infected with CWD. Research suggests that this disease is not naturally transmissible to humans, pets or other domestic livestock. Although progress has been made in understanding the disease, much is still unknown and active research is continuing.

## How is CWD transmitted?

The exact method of transmission has not been identified. But, evidence suggests that the disease can pass from animal to animal by direct contact or through contamination of feed, soil, and water sources with saliva, urine and/or faeces from infected animals.

## How is CWD diagnosed?

Currently, there is no approved live animal test for CWD. Diagnosis is made by microscopic examination of the brain and other tissues from dead animals.

## Where has CWD been detected?

CWD has not been detected in Manitoba. It has been found in farmed elk in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and farmed white-tailed deer in Alberta. It has also been found in wild mule deer and white-tailed deer in western Saskatchewan. In many of the mid-western United States, CWD has been found in farmed and wild deer and elk.





### Is the meat of an infected deer or elk safe for human consumption?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that based on its review of the science there is currently no evidence to indicate that CWD can be transmitted to humans. However, the WHO also recommends that all products from animals known to be infected with any TSE disease should not be consumed.

### Is it safe to eat deer and elk harvested in Manitoba?

Yes, it is safe. However, hunters should follow the recommended general precautions (see below).

### General precautions hunters should follow

Do not shoot an animal that appears to be sick.

It is recommended that hunters:

- wear rubber gloves when field dressing carcasses
- minimize or do not handle brain, eye, or spinal tissues
- debone the carcass and avoid cutting through the spine

- thoroughly clean knives with soap and warm water
- wash hands with soap and warm water

### What should you do if you see a deer or elk with CWD symptoms?

Note the precise location and contact the nearest Manitoba Conservation district office.

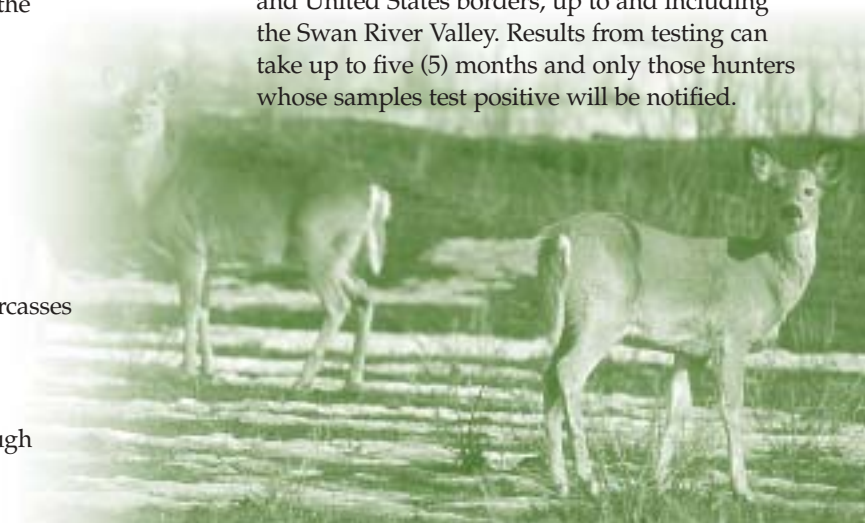
Manitoba Conservation will collect and test any wild deer or elk that appears sick and is exhibiting signs of being infected with CWD.

If you kill a deer or elk that is unhealthy and extremely thin **DO NOT** field dress the animal. Attach your game tag and contact the nearest Manitoba Conservation district office. Hunters who surrender a diseased or abnormal animal under this disease-monitoring program will be eligible for a replacement licence at no charge.

### What is Manitoba Conservation doing to address CWD?

#### Detection:

- Undertaking surveillance and testing of hunter-harvested deer and elk along the Saskatchewan and United States borders, up to and including the Swan River Valley. Results from testing can take up to five (5) months and only those hunters whose samples test positive will be notified.



#### Prevention:

- Placed a moratorium on the importation of native and exotic cervids (i.e., all members of the deer family), which pose a risk of spreading CWD.
- Implemented a ban on the possession of scents and other substances that contain urine, faeces, saliva or scent glands of cervids.
- It is illegal to bring into Manitoba a cervid that has been killed in another province or state without first removing the head, hide, hooves, mammary glands, entrails, internal organs, and spinal column. These parts must remain in the place of origin. Antlers and connecting bone plate that have been detached from the remainder of the skull and has had all hide and other tissue removed, may be brought in to the province, provided the bone plate and antler bases are treated with a solution of not less than two percent (2%) chlorine. Raw capes and hides that have been detached from the animals must be placed in a sealed waterproof container to ensure that no fluids, tissue or hair can escape. Once this process has been done, they may be brought in to the province provided that they are delivered, within five (5) days of entry, to a taxidermist or a licensed facility for chemical processing into a tanned product.

These restrictions apply to all hunters, including First Nations people.

#### Positive Results:

- If a positive wild or captive cervid is found, Manitoba Conservation, in co-operation with Manitoba Agriculture and Food (MAF) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), will initiate containment and eradication actions.

### Why is it important for hunters to participate in the disease-monitoring program?

Hunters play a vital role in wildlife management. Without hunter co-operation, Manitoba Conservation would not be able to collect an adequate number of deer or elk samples for testing.

### What is being done by other agencies?

- MAF, in co-operation with the CFIA, has a compulsory CWD disease-monitoring program in place for farmed elk. All captive elk deaths must be subjected to a postmortem examination and, if 12 months of age or older, also tested for CWD.
- Since 1997, MAF has not allowed the importation of farmed elk into Manitoba.

