



# COVID-19 Prevention Information for Hunters

December 14, 2021

## Background

- Wild and captive white-tailed deer in Quebec and in the United States have tested positive for COVID-19.
  - There have been no reported cases in Saskatchewan.
- COVID-19 infections have been found in other domestic and wild animals as well.
- There are no known cases of people catching COVID-19 from white-tailed deer.
- Research is underway in:
  - Canada to see if the infection exists in white-tailed deer and other cervids—moose, elk, mule deer and caribou, in other provinces.
  - Canada and other countries to discover how wildlife (including cervids) is infected, how widespread the infection is, and the potential risks posed to hunters, trappers and the public.

## What can hunters do to reduce their risk of infection?

While there is no evidence of transmission from white-tailed deer to humans, hunters should take precautions when dressing and handling deer carcasses.

- Wear a well fitted non-medical mask.
- Do not hunt or consume animals that appear sick or are found dead.
  - Report any sick or dead animals to your local wildlife authority.



## When handling and dressing the carcass:

- Wear gloves (e.g. rubber, latex, nitrile, vinyl) and eye protection (e.g. goggles, safety glasses, face shields)
- Do not eat, drink or smoke and avoid touching your face
- Process carcasses outdoors or in a well-ventilated area and keep knives sharp
- When handling tissues such as lungs, trachea (windpipe), mouth, and nasal cavity:
  - Avoid splashing or spraying fluids from these tissues as much as possible
  - Clean or change knives and equipment before handling the rest of the carcass
- Dispose of wastes properly
- Keep pets or hunting dogs away from carcasses and discarded tissues
- Dispose wastes properly and reduce the spread of **Chronic Wasting Disease** (see box→)

### Help Reduce the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease

- Don't bait or use salt licks.
- Don't quarter the carcass or debone the meat in the field.
- Double bag and dispose of the carcass and other wastes in a landfill or transfer station.

## After handling the carcass:

- Wash knives, other equipment and surfaces and sanitize with a bleach solution
  - 20 ml of unscented household bleach in 1 litre of water ( 4 teaspoons in 4 cups of water)
- Remove your gloves and wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- Change your clothing and footwear if possible
- Cook meat to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F) to kill any parasites, viruses or bacteria that may be present.

## How can you reduce the potential risk of a COVID-19 infection?

- Follow existing public health recommendations.
- Vaccination is still one of the most effective ways to protect you, your family and community.
  - Whenever possible, have a fully vaccinated person handle and dress carcasses.
  - Hunters with underlying health conditions or who are not fully vaccinated have a higher risk of a serious COVID-19 illness.