

	TITLE: Game Meat in Care Facilities Policy		POLICY # PHU – EHA - 001	
	UNIT: Public Health Unit		PROGRAM: Environmental Health	
	SOURCE: See reference list below			
	APPROVED BY: NITHA Executive Council		APPROVAL DATE: November 28, 2016	
	EFFECTIVE DATE: November 28, 2016		LAST REVIEWED: July 8, 2025	

Background

It is recognized that many of the clients in care facilities in northern Saskatchewan see game meat as a dietary staple. When living permanently or short term in a care facility (hospital, care home, long term care, group home etc.) having familiar foods can decrease stress, provide comfort, improve mental and social well-being and provide an opportunity for families of the client to give back to their community. However, it is also recognized that facilities want to provide safe unadulterated (wholesome/clean) and non-contaminated quality food to its clients. School feeding programs and daycares in northern communities also value serving traditional foods as a means to ensure cultural traditions are passed on to younger generations.

This policy aims to find a balance between traditions and food safety. Typically, traditional foods that would be seen are meat products - game meat (i.e. moose or elk) or fish. Meat is considered a potentially hazardous food. Potentially hazardous foods are those that support the rapid growth of pathogens and require certain precautions to prevent or minimize the risk of food borne illness. In many cases Public Health Agencies use “Approved Source” as a means to describe foods that are inspected or come from an approved facility. Game meat is not easily approved or processed in approved meat processing facilities due to the field dressing that occurs.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow for the serving of wild game in care facilities within NITHA. If other facilities (school lunch programs, daycares or other events/facilities) wish to use this policy they should communicate their plan to meet the processes below with their Environmental Public Health Officer EPHO prior to the event.

Risk Mitigation Processes

Game meat could be made available if the following conditions can be met:

1. The game will be gathered by a hunter recognized by the community as an experienced, knowledgeable hunter.
2. The person who is hunting or fishing is doing so in a legal manner. (Note: there is a federal regulation against using lead shot to hunt migratory birds such as ducks and geese through the *Migratory Birds Regulations*. *Exposure to lead shot pellets or fragments can expose individuals to the toxic effects of lead – this is especially important for children and women of childbearing age.*)

3. The person who is hunting should be encouraged to use bullets not containing lead as it may result in exposure to lead from bullet fragments. If lead bullets are used, the meat around the damaged path of the bullet should be removed as part of the dressing process.
4. The person who has hunted and/or dressed the animal is familiar with game behaviour and can monitor the animal before hunting and the meat after processing, for signs of illness to ensure the meat is safe for human consumption.
5. A special note on **Chronic Wasting Disease**: All cervid (moose, deer, elk, reindeer) hunted with the intention of human consumption should be tested for CWD. The process for having the animal tested is found here on the Saskatchewan Environment website: [Chronic Wasting Disease | Fish and Wildlife Diseases | Government of Saskatchewan](#)
6. Out of hunting season testing is handled a bit differently:
 - a. The hunter procures the game, and either separates the head and removes the horns and double bags the sample OR follows the attached video to prepare the sample for easier shipping. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ui_PJREigw. The small tissue samples should be placed in a non crushable container. In any event both samples should be frozen for transport.
 - b. The hunter completes the submission form attached as “ CWHC for Indigenous” and puts it in a ziplock bag separate from the sealed bag with the sample. The sample typically does best if some newspaper or paper towel is in with the frozen sample to keep any liquids from damaging the submission form.
 - c. The hunter contacts Iga Stasiuk iga.stasiak@gov.sk.ca or Erin Moffatt erin.moffatt@gov.sk.ca to determine transportation options to Saskatoon.

In any case, the game meat test should come back as negative **before** the meat is consumed. This can take several weeks and the facility should have a well defined system for marking meat that is not yet ready to be served to clients.

7. Wash and sanitize all equipment and food contact surfaces used to handle game before and after use.
8. The person who has hunted and dressed the meat understands that those clients in a care facility are more vulnerable to illness. There is a strong preference for the meat to be dressed in a facility with handwashing and utensil washing facilities along with potable water.
9. Remember, never handle or eat an animal that has died from unknown causes.
10. All game should be gutted and refrigerated within a few hours of the hunt to avoid spoilage. The meat should be packaged and labelled with the date, type of meat and donators name.
11. The facility preparing the meat has kitchen staff that are familiar with the handling and observing of game meat for any naturally occurring disease (i.e. parasites or growths) and hold safe food handler training.
12. The facility should have the ability to store and prepare the meat separately from foods that regulatory authorities would consider “Approved Source”. (I.e. purchased from suppliers). This means that knives and all food contact surfaces are washed and sanitized before and after game meat is prepared.

13. All meat shall be stored at 4°C or below for refrigeration and -18°C or lower for freezing. Game meat shall be cooked to an internal temperature as per Appendix B. The facility must have a properly calibrated thermometer on site at all times to ensure these temperatures are met.
14. Frozen game meat and/or fish (potentially hazardous foods) must be thawed quickly or in manner that will prevent the rapid growth of pathogenic bacteria. When foods are removed from the freezer, one of the following three safe thawing methods must be used:
 - Thaw food in a refrigerator at 4°C (40°F) or less.
 - Thaw food under running cold water. Food must be completely submerged.
 - Thaw food in a microwave according to manufacturer's instructions and cook immediately.
15. Each time game or fish from a local hunter/fisherperson is served, the clients, staff and visitors shall be notified in writing that the meat is not from an inspected source.
16. Each time game or fish from a local hunter/fisherperson is served, an alternate protein source should also be offered at that meal.
17. Each time a facility receives game meat it should track: The date received, the name and phone number of the hunter or fisherperson, the species received, the volume of meat received, a general description of where the animal was hunted/fished. A sample tracking sheet is included as Appendix A. Keep a list of people served with game meat at each care facility.
18. A cooking temperature chart is attached for reference as Appendix B

NOTE: If a client in a care facility becomes ill and their food history includes game meat, their illness should be flagged as high priority and their food history noted. A list of known illnesses that humans can contract from animals is shown in Appendix C.

If all of the above conditions can be met and tracking forms can be made available for inspection by an Environmental Public Health Officer (EPHO), game meat could be safely provided to clients in northern on-reserve care facilities.

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that any facility that holds a Regional Health Authority Public Eating Establishment licence (from a Public Health Inspector), discuss the use of this policy **prior** to implementing it with their Public Health Inspector.

REFERENCES:

Safe internal cooking temperatures, Health Canada

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/safety-salubrite/tips-conseils/cook-temperatures-cuisson-tbl-eng.php>

Diseases you can get from wild life, Saskatchewan Environment et al.

http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/wildlife_diseases

First Nations Inuit Health Branch Safe Food Handler Training Program, 2015

Food Safety: Information for First Nations

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spnia/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/promotion/safety-salubrite/hunt-chasse-eng.pdf

Food Safety – Ontario Ministry of Health & Long Term Care

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/publichealth/foodsafety/cook.aspx>

Appendix A

Game Meat Tracking Form

Date received	Name of Hunter	Phone number of Hunter	Species (deer, moose, jackfish)	Volume of meat received (pounds or number of fillets)	Approximate location where meat was gathered	Date Cervid test came back negative for CWD

Appendix B

Safe Internal Cooking Temperatures chart

Meat, poultry, eggs and fish	Temperature
Beef, veal and lamb (pieces and whole cuts)	
Medium-rare	63°C (145°F)
Medium	71°C (160°F)
Well done	77°C (170°F)
Pork (for example, ham, pork loin, ribs)	
Pork (pieces and whole cuts)	71°C (160°F)
Ground meat and meat mixtures (for example, burgers, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf and casseroles)	
Beef, veal, lamb and pork	71°C (160°F)
Poultry (for example, chicken, turkey)	74°C (165°F)
Mechanically tenderized beef (solid cut)	
Beef, veal	63°C (145°F)
Steak (turn over at least twice during cooking)	63°C (145°F)
Poultry (for example, chicken, turkey, duck)	
Pieces	74°C (165°F)
Whole	82°C (180°F)
Egg	
Egg dishes	74°C (165°F)
Seafood	
Fish (to kill the parasites that may be in fish you may freeze the fish at -20C consistently for 7 days)	70°C (158°F)
Shellfish (for example, shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops, clams, mussels and oysters) (Since it is difficult to use a food thermometer to check the temperature of shellfish, discard any that don't open when cooked).	74°C (165°F)
Others	
Others (for example, hot dogs, stuffing, leftovers)	74°C (165°F)
Game	Temperature
Chops, steaks and roasts (deer, elk, moose, caribou/reindeer, antelope and pronghorn)	
Well done	74°C (165°F)
Ground meat	
Ground meat and meat mixtures	74°C (165°F)
Ground venison and sausage	74°C (165°F)
Large game	
Bear, bison, musk-ox, walrus, etc.	74°C (165°F)
Small game	
Rabbit, muskrat, beaver, etc.	74°C (165°F)
Game birds/waterfowl (for example, wild turkey, duck, goose, partridge and pheasant)	
Whole	82°C (180°F)
Breasts and roasts	74°C (165°F)
Thighs, wings	74°C (165°F)
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	74°C (165°F)

Appendix C

POTENTIAL ILLNESSES FROM ANIMALS

Anisakiasis
Anthrax
Chronic Wasting Disease
Diphyllobothriasis
Giant Liver Fluke
Hydatid Disease
Leptospirosis
Moose Measles
Orf
Papillomas (warts)
Plague
Rabies
Ringworm
Sarcocystis
Sarcoptic Mange
Seroma (hydrocyst)
Trichinellosis
Tuberculosis
Tularemia