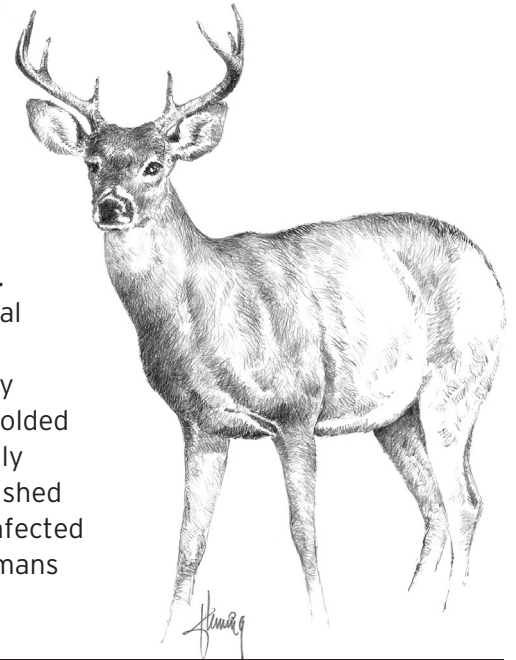




# Common Sense Precautions FOR HANDLING AND PROCESSING DEER

Common sense precautions while handling and processing deer should be taken at all times. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is one of many diseases that can affect deer. CWD is a fatal transmissible neurological disease that affects cervid species such as white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, red deer and sika. It is classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, a family of diseases that includes scrapie (found in sheep) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE; found in cattle). Much remains unknown about this disease. The peculiarities of its transmission, infection rate, incubation period, and potential for transmission to other species are still being investigated. What is known is that CWD is invariably fatal, and can be passed directly from deer to deer and indirectly through environmental contamination. Scientists believe CWD is caused by a misfolded protein ("prion") that replicates and infects other normal proteins. Prions generally concentrate in the brain, spinal cord, eyes, lymph nodes and spleen, and they are shed in saliva, urine, blood, soft-antler material, feces, and from decomposition of an infected animal. There is no scientific evidence that chronic wasting disease can infect humans or domestic livestock.



## General Precaution

- Do not shoot or eat any part of a deer that appears sick. If hunting within a CWD Zone, please accurately document the location of any deer that appears sick and contact a TPWD office or call TPWD headquarters in Austin toll-free at (800) 792-1112 and enter 5 for wildlife and 1 for general wildlife information. Or contact TAHC toll-free at (800) 550-8242.

## Field Dressing

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- All internal organs and inedible carcass parts should be left at the site of harvest.
- Clean processing knives and equipment of residue and disinfect with a 50/50 solution of household chlorine bleach and water. Wipe down counters and let them dry; soak knives for one hour.

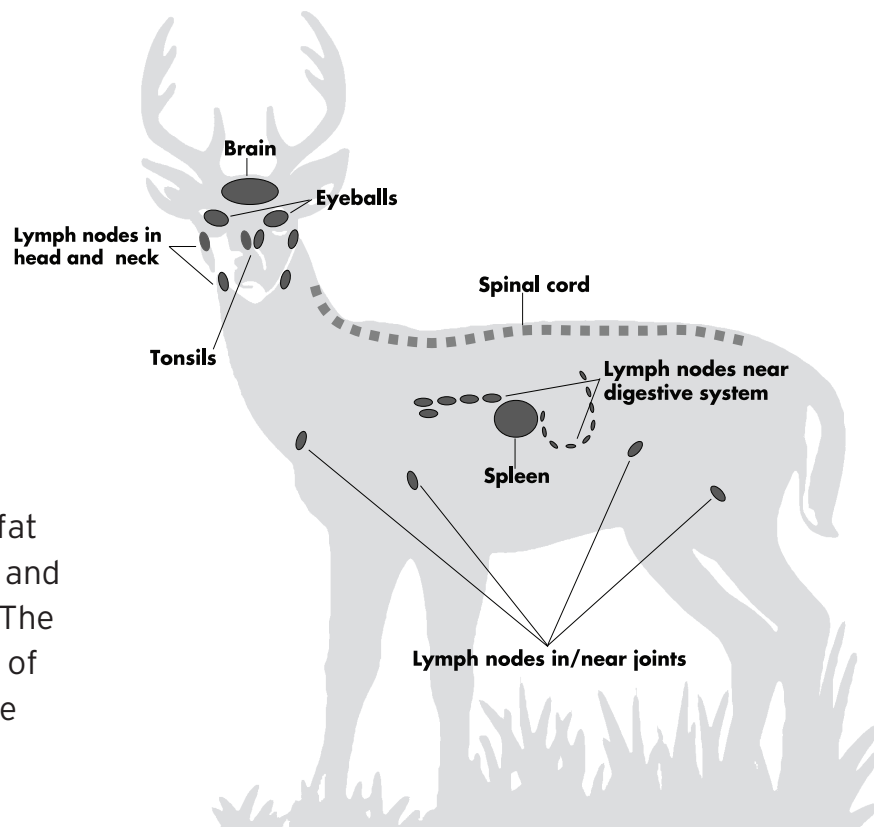
## Cutting and Processing

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- If removing antlers, soak the blade of the saw used in a bleach solution for one hour.
- No deer/elk carcass parts or carcasses can enter Texas from a state or country known to have CWD, and no deer/elk carcasses or part of carcasses can be transported out of a CWD Zone in the Trans Pecos or Panhandle. Explanations and exemptions to importation restrictions can be found at [tpwd.texas.gov/cwd](http://tpwd.texas.gov/cwd)
- Inedible parts should be left at the site of harvest, or disposed of in a landfill. Hunters should note that a deer may not be processed beyond quarters until it reaches the final destination. Once at the final destination for the meat, bone out the meat from the deer and remove all fat and connective tissue (the web-like membranes attached to the meat). This will also remove lymph nodes.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment and work areas with bleach solution after processing.

# What parts can I use?

There are some parts of the deer you should never eat, even if the animal looks healthy. The parts listed below are tissues where prions generally concentrate.

Normal field dressing and trimming fat from meat will remove lymph nodes and other parts that accumulate prions. The diagram shows some main locations of lymph nodes and other tissues where prions concentrate.



## ■ Never eat meat from a deer that looks sick.

## ■ Never eat a deer's:

- Brain
- Eyeballs
- Spinal cord
- Spleen
- Lymph nodes

## ■ To be sure you've removed all of the parts listed above:

- Gut and skin the deer
- Cut meat from the bone with a knife; don't cut through bones
- Remove all fat, membranes and tendons from the meat
- Remove the head

## Clinical symptoms/signs of sick deer

Please note that many diseases in deer cause many of the same symptoms as CWD, and not all symptoms/signs of CWD will occur in all cases.

- Loss of fear of humans
- Nervousness or high excitability
- Teeth-grinding
- Loss of coordination
- Notable weakness
- Inability to stand
- Rough dull haircoat
- Excessive salivation
- Drooping of the head and ears
- Excessive thirst
- Difficulty swallowing
- Severe emaciation and dehydration

**Report sick deer**, especially those within a CWD zone to a TPWD Game Warden or Wildlife Biologist. For additional information contact Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

[www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov)