

WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV) AND HUNTERS:

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING, PREPARATION, AND CONSUMPTION OF WILD GAME

DON'T BE AFRAID TO HUNT THIS YEAR.

A change of season is upon us and some hunters are concerned about West Nile Virus (WNV). The chance that a particular bird or mammal that you hunt is infected with the West Nile Virus is low.

YOU CAN MINIMIZE YOUR CHANCES OF EXPOSURE TO WNV.

Follow the general recommendations for WNV when hunting in areas and at times of significant mosquito activity. For example, wear a long sleeved shirt/jacket and long legged pants along with socks and boots. Also, consider using an insect repellent containing DEET and follow the product label's specific instructions.

Do **not** hunt any animal you find acting abnormally.

Do **not** take an animal you find dead, even if it appears another hunter killed it.

Do **not** take road-killed game.

HANDLING & STORAGE OF WILD GAME.

Accept only wholesome, uncontaminated wild game.

Use rubber or plastic gloves when handling uncooked meat.

Keep raw meats tightly wrapped and separated from other foods. This is a good practice for all meats.

Keep meat refrigerated below 45°F or frozen. Thaw in the refrigerator or in the microwave for immediate use. Precautions should be used during thawing.

COOKING.

Cook ground meat until well done. Solid cuts should be cooked to an internal temperature of **140°F** for at least 12 minutes. Always use a meat thermometer to assure complete cooking.

The long term, high temperature of preparing stews is generally an excellent way to assure the safety of meat. Meat that is tender or falling apart in a stew mixture is a good indicator of adequate cooking.

LEFTOVERS.

Keep foods hot at **140°F**. Refrigerate leftovers immediately. Reheat to **165°F**.

CLEAN-UP.

Soak any utensils used to prepare the meat in a solution of one part household bleach to 10 parts water for 20 minutes. Use a disinfectant to wipe down the work area (ie- counters & cutting boards). Wash hands thoroughly before and after food preparation.

Adapted from: "What Hunters should know about rabies" and "Guidelines for the processing & preparation of venison".

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