

Deer can catch COVID: Here's what hunters should know

December 2 2021, by Matt Shipman



Credit: Andrew Coop

Research has shown that [deer can become infected with COVID-19](#), raising questions among some hunters about whether field-dressing deer or eating venison can pose a risk of contracting the disease.

"At this point, [deer](#) are not considered a significant vector for spreading COVID-19, but there are some simple things hunters can do to reduce

their risk of contracting COVID-19 and keep themselves and their loved ones safe," says Ellen Shumaker, a food safety expert at NC State.

With that in [mind](#), Shumaker and her colleagues on the FoodCOVNet team, led by NC State, have created [a one-page factsheet on deer and COVID-19](#) aimed specifically at sharing information with hunters.

Here are the [best practices](#) they outline for reducing COVID-19 risk when hunting deer:

- Wear a face covering when in close contact with a breathing deer.
- Wear gloves while field dressing deer.
- Wash hands thoroughly after hunting, handling any part of the deer carcass and/or handling raw meat.
- Keep [raw meat](#) and other carcass parts away from ready-to-eat food.
- Cook deer meat to a minimum internal temperature of 158°F

The FoodCOVNet team has also assembled a host of online resources providing [basic background on COVID-19 prevention](#), as well as [steps you can take in your home and community](#) to reduce your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

Provided by North Carolina State University

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