



American Veterinary Medical Association Disease Prevention Quick Tips for Wild Game Processors

There are medical risks associated with handling wildlife, and certain safety precautions should be taken. Diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans, either through direct contact with the animal or a contaminated surface or water, through ingestion of animal products (e.g., meat and milk) or through insect transmission from an animal are called zoonotic diseases. Common sense measures can reduce the risk of illness, and processors can contribute to disease prevention and food safety by following simple steps:

- Do not use the same utensils to process different species.
- If there are any old wounds on the carcass, and especially if there is pus present, meat in this area should be removed and discarded. A large area of tissue around the wound and pus pockets should also be cut away with the wound, even if the tissue looks normal.
- Minimize contact with brain or spinal tissues.
- When removing antlers, use a hand saw rather than a power saw, and always wear safety glasses.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer immediately after handling wild game tissues and meat. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling each animal carcass.
- Wash tools, equipment and working surfaces (including tables and cutting boards) thoroughly with soap and water, followed by disinfection, between carcasses. Adding 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water is usually adequate for use as a cleaning/disinfecting solution, or use commercially available products approved for disinfecting equipment.
- Do not mix meat from different sources.

More information about zoonotic disease prevention for hunters can be found in the *Zoonotic Disease Precautions for Hunters* document.