

# What You Need to Know about **Lead in Venison**



for  
**Food Service  
Providers**

# What do I need to know before serving venison?

- Deer shot with **lead bullets** can have small lead fragments in the meat.
- Some of the venison donated to your organization **may have lead in it..**



Ground venison usually has **more** lead fragments.

Steaks and chops usually have **fewer** lead fragments.



- Even the best attempts to remove the lead fragments before processing can still leave lead in the meat. Most lead fragments are **too small to be seen or felt while chewing.**
- It's best not to eat the organs from any wild game because **lead and other chemicals collect in the organs.**

# Who is at greatest risk from lead in wild game?



Lead, even in the smallest amounts, is a serious health risk for:

- **Children ages 6 and under**
- **Pregnant women and unborn babies**

## What are the dangers of lead?

Lead affects the **nervous system**, and can cause problems with **brain function**.

In children, lead can cause **developmental problems** like lowered IQ and learning disabilities.

Lead is unhealthy for adults too, but women beyond childbearing age and adult men are at less risk of health problems from small amounts of lead.

## As a food service provider, you can help reduce the chance of lead exposure in your clients.

- **Do not serve any venison to children ages 6 and under or to pregnant women.** Serve these clients store-bought meat or a type of meat that was not shot with lead bullets.
- For clients of all ages, serve ground venison **no more than once a week**.
- Try to use **whole cuts** (like steaks and chops) of venison rather than ground meat. Ground venison tends to have more lead fragments.
- **Serve venison in soups, stews, or casseroles** rather than in burgers and meatloaves. This will reduce the amount of venison eaten by each person, which will reduce the chance of lead exposure.
- Acids (like vinegar or wine) make it easier for a person's body to absorb lead. **Avoid using acidic substances** like vinegar when cooking venison.

Give the brochure  
***“Protect your Child from Lead in Venison”***  
to your clients.



Please call the  
**Michigan Department of Community Health**  
**1-800-648-6942**  
for more information.



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