



**Wisconsin Veterinary  
Diagnostic Laboratory**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



## Instructions for Submitting Samples to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL) for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Testing



**Before submitting any samples for testing, you must complete a mandatory deer harvest report: [www.Michigan.gov/DNRHarvestReport](http://www.Michigan.gov/DNRHarvestReport)**

**The instructions here are for submitting lymph nodes for testing.** It is the hunter’s responsibility to collect the correct tissue, and to store and submit samples appropriately so that they are suitable for testing. No refunds or account credits will be issued for samples that are unsuitable for testing when they arrive at the laboratory.

Submitting whole heads is not encouraged and additional costs will apply. If heads are submitted, they should be double bagged in leak-proof bags with the kill tag attached. Heads should be shipped within 1-2 days of harvest. If that is not possible, please freeze the head until delivery.

You will need to provide your own shipping supplies including: a hard-sided shipping container or cooler, a gel ice pack, and zip-top bags.

### Cost for CWD Testing

1. You have the choice to submit lymph nodes that have been extracted from your deer’s head (**preferred**) or to submit the entire deer head (**not recommended**). The extra cost for whole head submission covers lymph node extraction and head disposal by the WVDL.
2. You will be invoiced for payment after testing is complete.

Option 1 Lymph Nodes Only	Option 2 Whole Head	Overnight Shipping Cost
\$24.06	\$50	\$25.00

### STEP 1 – Option 1: Lymph Node Submission

1. After a successful hunt, **please refer to the instructions in Appendix A** or the online instruction video at [www.michigan.gov/cwd](http://www.michigan.gov/cwd). Click on ‘Get My Deer Tested’ and the ‘Paid Testing’ tab for how to remove lymph nodes for testing. There may also be a taxidermist in your area that can remove lymph nodes for a small fee.
2. Please also review the submission guidelines from the WI Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory <https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/tse-cwd-testing/>
3. Package lymph nodes in a zip-top bag and seal securely. Place bagged lymph nodes in a second zip-top bag and seal securely. If you are submitting samples from multiple deer, each set of lymph nodes must be packaged in separate sets of zip-top bags.
4. Label the outer bag for each set of lymph nodes with the date of collection, hunter’s name and DNR Kill Tag License Number (**Figure 1**). The Kill Tag License Number is unique for each deer harvested.

- Place samples in freezer until ready to ship. Samples **MUST** be frozen prior to shipment. Freezing helps to preserve the tissue so that it is suitable for testing.

## STEP 1 – Option 2: Whole Head Submission

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### If submitting lymph nodes skip to Step 2.

- Remove the deer head from the carcass leaving about 4 inches of the neck attached.
- Double bag the head in plastic bags and tie off or zip tie each bag to seal.
- Label each outer bag (prior to placing the head inside) with the date of collection, hunter's name and DNR Kill Tag License Number (**Figure 1**).
- Freeze the head until ready to ship.



**Figure 1.** Deer Harvester Tag showing Kill Tag License Number (circled) to be used on submission form.

## STEP 2: Submission Form

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- Go to the Wisconsin VDL website at <https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/submission-and-order-forms/> and click on 'CWD – Hunter Submission Form'.
- Fill out the Submission Form completely. A separate Submission Form must be completed for each animal. For example, if you are submitting samples from three deer, you will need to fill out three Submission Forms.
  - The numbers on the form must match the information on the zip-top bag(s).
  - The DNR/CWD # and Harvest Tag ID on the form is your kill tag license number.
- Place the (folded) submission form(s) in a separate zip-top bag and to be placed it in the shipping container with the sample(s).
- The WVDL has contracted with UPS for a flat overnight shipping rate of \$25 per container. Shipments can be picked up from your home for delivery to the WVDL.
- Pre-printed labels can be printed from the WVDL website: <https://wvdl.wisc.edu/submission-and-order-forms/>
  - Click on Test Resources and select "Shipping Program"
  - Scroll down to Shipping Labels and select "Click here for UPS Return Labels"
  - Select "Continue as Guest"
  - Enter your information in the first column (Ship From)
  - Select "WVDL-Madison" in the second column (Ship To)
  - In the third column (Shipment) **You must select "UPS Next Day Air". Do not select** UPS Ground as samples may decompose and may not be viable for testing.
  - Select "Process Shipment"

### **STEP 3: Sample Shipping**

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1. The submitter must notify WVDL by emailing [tse coordinators@wvdl.wisc.edu](mailto:tse coordinators@wvdl.wisc.edu) and [submissions@wvdl.wisc.edu](mailto:submissions@wvdl.wisc.edu) including the number of samples and the UPS shipment tracking number on the day the samples are being shipped.
2. On the day of shipment, place frozen sample(s) in a hard-sided shipping container or cooler.
3. Include a frozen ice (gel) pack to keep the sample cool. Please do not use regular ice as it will melt and cause damage to the included materials. Leaking packages may not be delivered by UPS.
4. Pack the container with paper towel or newspaper to keep contents from shifting.
5. Samples should ONLY be shipped Monday through Thursday to avoid the package sitting over the weekend and sample decomposition. Friday shipping for a Saturday delivery will cost \$35 and is strongly discouraged.

### **STEP 4: WVDL Testing and Result Reporting**

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1. CWD results will be emailed and may take up to six weeks to be reported. Results will be reported to the submitter, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and any additional email addresses listed by the submitter on the submission form.
2. Any lymph nodes examined containing abscess material (pus) will be sent to the MDNR to rule out bovine tuberculosis. This will be at no cost to the submitter. The MDNR will contact you regarding this testing if it is necessary. This will not affect turn-around times for CWD results.

### **Additional Information**

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- See Appendix A in this document or this instructional video on removing lymph nodes: <https://youtu.be/lc-IRqzoFKs>
- Have questions for the WI VDL about testing or submitting samples? Please contact Daniel Barr, 608.574.0432 or [Daniel.barr@wvdl.wisc.edu](mailto:Daniel.barr@wvdl.wisc.edu).
- Need to contact the MDNR with harvest or disease surveillance questions? Please call the Wildlife Disease Laboratory, 517.336.5030

## Appendix A. Removing Lymph nodes for CWD Testing Submission

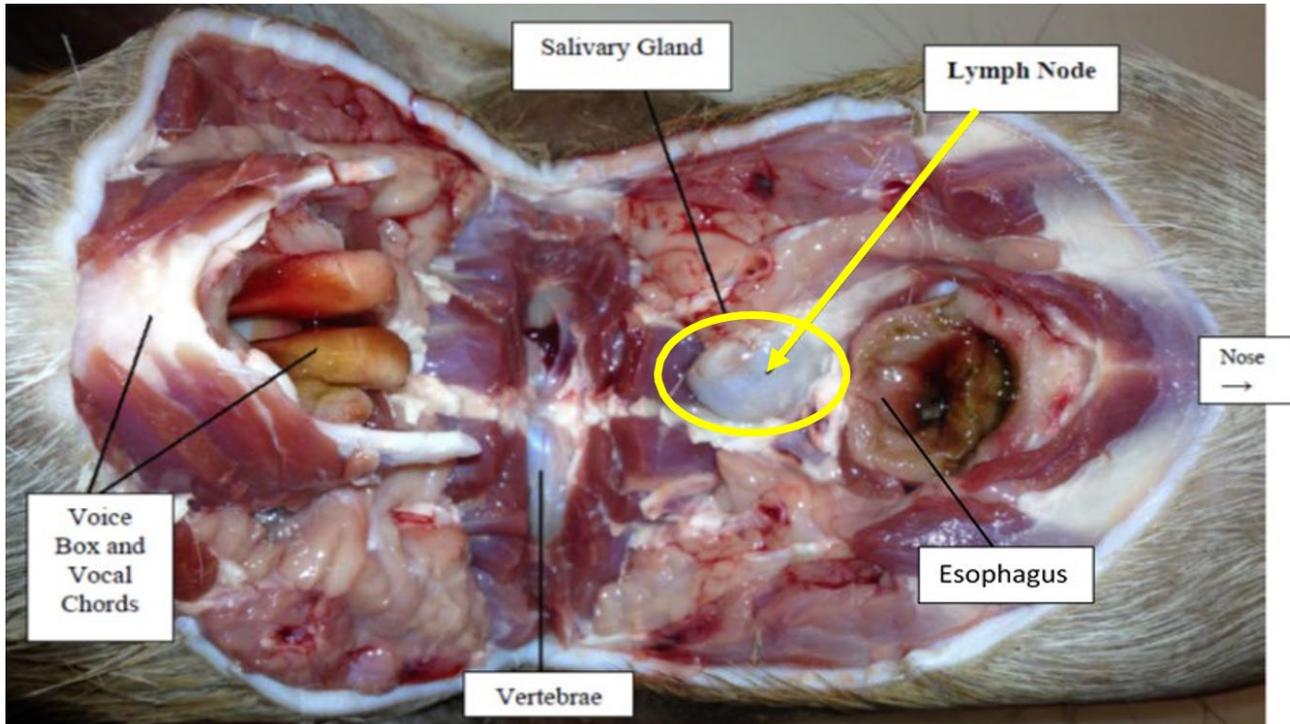
**Step 1.** Locate the larynx approximately where the neck bends.



**Step 2.** Make a U-shaped cut across the neck toward each ear. Your incision should be just behind the jawbone.



**Step 3.** Grasp the larynx and cut back the neck muscle exposing the esophagus opening shown below. The lymph nodes will sit in a pocket to the lower left and lower right of the esophagus. Grasp each node with forceps and cut away at surrounding tissue. Try to remove both nodes as intact as possible.



### Proper Tissue: Medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Nodes



Lymph nodes can come in many different sizes and colors, but always look bean shaped and sit in pockets near the center of the throat. The nodes will be firm and retain their shape when gently pressed against a hard surface.

Please note that if tissue other than medial retropharyngeal lymph nodes are received, a test cannot be performed, and a refund will not be offered. **After sampling, consider saving the deer head, with 4-5 inches of neck below it in case the incorrect tissue was submitted.** Keep this frozen until you have received valid test results. If you are ever unsure if you are collecting the correct tissue, please refer to the above photos, use the videos listed in the references section, or you may send the entire head at additional cost.