



## Submitting Samples to the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MSU VDL) 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. Whole heads may only be submitted by dropping them off at the Laboratory and testing will not be done unless payment (\$70) is made at the time heads are submitted. **Online ordering is not available for submitting whole heads.** Hunters who wish to submit whole heads to the VDL need to drop off the head during regular business hours M – F (between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.). After arriving at the laboratory please stay in your vehicle and call 517.353.1683 for instructions. Heads should be double bagged in leak-proof bags with the kill tag attached. Heads should be delivered within 1-2 days of harvest. If that is not possible, please freeze head until delivery.

\*Testing is available only for deer harvested in Michigan.

### 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 MSU VDL.

Option 1 Lymph Nodes Only	Option 2 Whole Head	Overnight Shipping Cost
\$30.00	\$70	\$17.00

### STEP 1: Package Samples

- 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) 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.
- 3) Label the outer bag with hunter’s last name and DNR Kill Tag License Number (**Figure 1**). The Kill Tag License Number is unique for each deer harvested.
- 4) 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.




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

## STEP 2: Order Testing

- 1) Go to the MSU VDL website at <https://cvm.msu.edu/vdl/submit-a-sample> and click on **Information on CWD Testing for Michigan Hunters**. Click on Order Testing. *You will need to have a credit card to pay for testing to complete your order.*
- 2) Fill out the Order Form completely. A separate Order Form must be completed for each animal. For example, if you are submitting samples from three deer, you will need to fill out three Order Forms.
- 3) Select delivery method: drop off samples at the lab (no cost) or overnight shipping (\$17). **If submitting more than one set of lymph nodes** (no more than four sets per shipping container), you will need to pay \$30 for each set of lymph nodes to be tested. Register each animal individually and select “overnight shipping” for first animal and “drop off samples at the lab” for each subsequent animal.
- 4) Click to submit. You should see a screen like this. Enter your name and email address, then click ‘Continue’.

Description	Amount
Payment	\$47.00
Subtotal	\$47.00
Total	\$47.00

- 5) Follow the prompts to pay with credit card. Cost for lymph node testing is \$30. Total cost for testing with overnight shipping is \$47. Once payment information is entered, click ‘Continue’.
- 6) You should now see your order form with payment noted and a bar code at the top. This is the form that you will print and include with your samples.

Order ID	W00000911	Date	09/08/2024	
Name	Hunter, Deer			
Address	123 Woods Ln Town, MI 44444			
Phone	5175551212			
Email	deerhunter@x.com			
DNR Kill Tag ID	01010101	Gender	Male	
Species	Whitetail Deer	Age	Yearling	
Harvest Date	09/08/2024	County	Mecosta	
Delivery	Send with UPS shipping label			
Comments				
		Payment	47.00	

- 7) If you selected overnight shipping, click on "Get UPS Label." Follow the prompts to process your shipment and print your UPS shipping label. You will also receive an email with a link to retrieve your label if needed. After printing your label, return to the CWD Order Form.
- 8) **Print the CWD Order Form.** If submitting samples from more than one animal, be sure to print each Order Form.

### STEP 3: Getting Samples to the Laboratory

#### Option 1. Shipping Samples:

- 1) Samples should be removed from the freezer just before shipment. Place the double-bagged samples in a cardboard or hard-sided box.
- 2) Put your Order Form(s) (with bar code and order information) into a separate zip-top bag and place it in the shipping container with your samples
- 3) Place a small gel icepack in the container to keep the samples cool during transit. This helps preserve the samples for testing. **Important: DO NOT use ice** as it will melt and can damage your samples or Order Form. Leaking packages will not be delivered, and senders can be fined.
- 4) Add paper towel, newspaper, or similar insulating material to help keep samples cool and prevent materials from shifting during transit. Ensure that the box is large enough for all samples, icepack, and insulating material to fit comfortably.
- 5) Completely seal/tape shut the container and print and attach the shipping label. Follow UPS instructions.
- 6) You can drop off your package at any UPS location. Search for the site closest to you here: <https://www.ups.com/dropoff>. We recommend using a staffed facility rather than a drop-box. You can also give your package to any UPS driver making a delivery.

#### Option 2. Delivering Samples to the Lab:

- 1) Remove samples from the freezer just before driving to the laboratory.
- 2) Put your Order Form(s) (with bar code and order information) into a separate zip-top bag.
- 3) Place your double-bagged samples and bagged Order Form(s) into a larger zip-top bag.
- 4) Bring samples and Order Form(s) to the MSU VDL, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910. See our website at [animalhealth.msu.edu](http://animalhealth.msu.edu) for driving directions and maps if needed. Samples can be received

Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

- 5) When you arrive at the Laboratory, enter through the front door and proceed to the front desk.
- 6) If bringing a whole head (not recommended) please stay in your vehicle and call 517.353.1683 for instructions.

NOTE: If hunters wish to carpool samples to the lab, that is fine. One person can drop off samples from multiple friends, family, or neighbors. Each set of samples must be packaged as described above: samples registered, order paid, Order Form provided, samples and Order Forms double-bagged, and appropriately labeled.

#### **STEP 4: Testing & Getting Results**

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- 1) CWD results will be sent via email to the address provided on your Order Form and to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources within two weeks after samples are received at the Laboratory.
- 2) Any lymph nodes examined containing abscess material (pus) will be given to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to rule out bovine tuberculosis. There is no additional 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.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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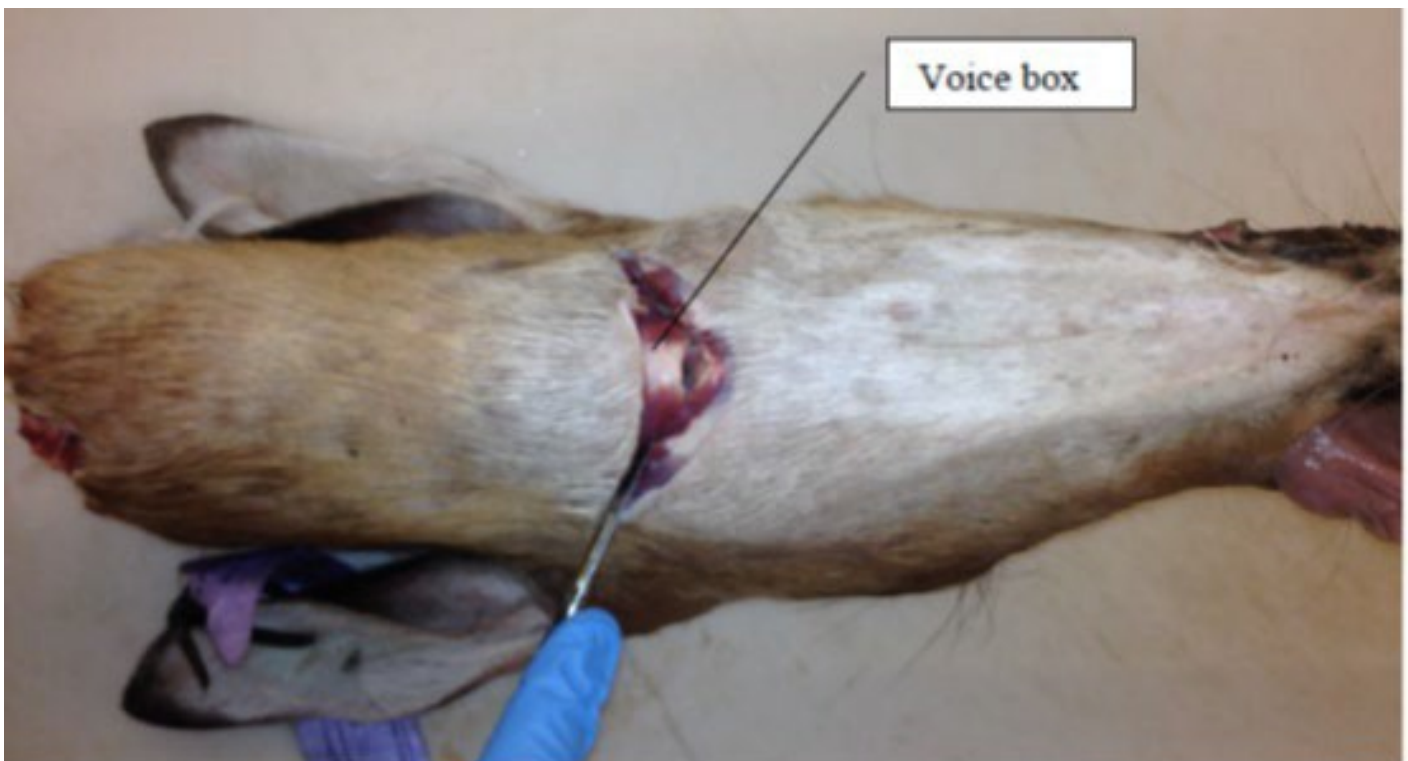
- See Appendix A in this document or this instructional video on removing lymph nodes: <https://youtu.be/lc-lRqzoFKs>
- Have questions for the MSU VDL about testing or submitting samples? Please call us at 517.353.1683.
- Need to contact the MDNR with harvest or disease surveillance questions? Please 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.

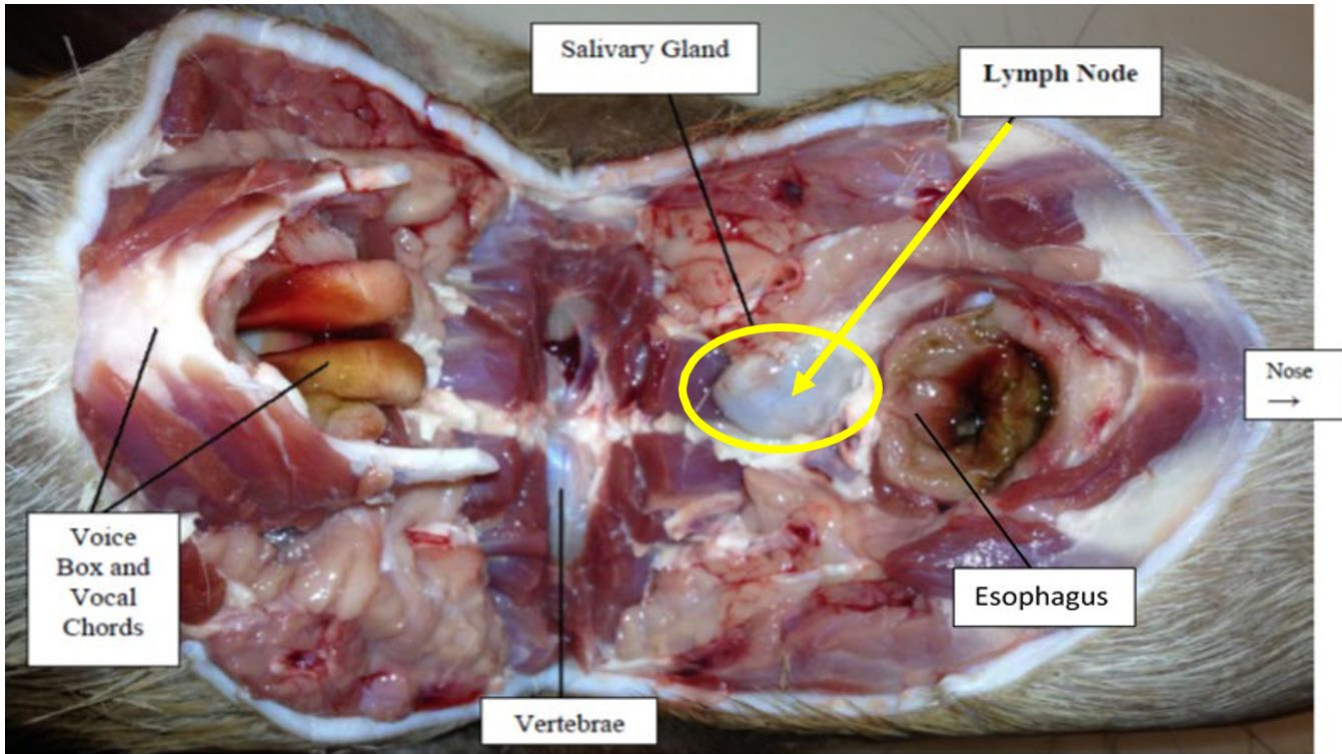


**Step 2.** Make a U-shaped cut across the neck toward each ear. Your incision should be just behind the jawbone.





**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.