



Protect your Child from Lead in Venison

Venison (deer meat) can be a healthy source of food for you and your family. But studies show that lead bullets can leave **small pieces of lead** in the venison. These small lead pieces cannot be seen in the meat or felt in your mouth while chewing. When you swallow this lead, it absorbs into your body.



During processing, lead bullet fragments can get mixed further into the venison. For this reason, 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.

In order to reduce your exposure, it's best not to eat the organs from any wild game because **lead and other chemicals may build up in the organs.**

What are the dangers of lead?

Most people who have lead in their blood do not look or act sick. However, there is no safe level of lead in the blood. As lead exposure increases, the range and seriousness of health effects increases.

In children, even low levels of lead can lower IQ scores, decrease hearing and kidney function, and increase problems with behavior and attention-related disorders.

Low levels of lead in adults can alter mood and behavior, decrease kidney and cognitive function, slow reaction times and increase blood pressure.

Who is most at risk of health problems from lead in venison?



Being exposed to any lead can be a serious issue for developing bodies and nervous systems. Because of this, those most at risk of health effects are:

- **Young children and infants who eat venison.**
- **Fetuses.**
- **Nursing babies.**

When a pregnant person is exposed to lead, it can pass through the placenta to the fetus. Lead can also pass through breast milk to a nursing baby.

People who are nursing, pregnant or could become pregnant, and children ages 6 years old and under should avoid eating venison that has been shot with lead bullets. Ask if venison is used in the meals served to you. If so, consider choosing other foods being offered, or request a different meat be served to you and your children.

What about children over 6 and adults?

- Older children and adults should eat ground venison that was shot with lead bullets in moderation.
- Try to use whole cuts (like steaks and chops) of venison rather than ground meat. Ground venison tends to have more lead fragments.
- Remember, there is no safe level of lead in the blood. As lead exposure increases, the range and seriousness of health effects increases.



For more information about lead:

Call MDHHS at 800-648-6942

or visit Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe.

