



What You Need to Know About Lead in Venison

for Food Service Providers

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.



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.**

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, lead can pass through the placenta to the fetus. Lead can also pass through breast milk to a nursing baby.

What are the dangers of lead in venison?

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.

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 people.** Serve these clients other types of meat that was not shot with lead bullets.
- 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.
- 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.



For more information about lead:

Call MDHHS at 800-648-6942

or visit Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe.