



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
**VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC
 LABORATORY**

Submitting Samples to the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MSU VDL) for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Testing

The MSU VDL has an online system for registering your submission(s). There is no need to pre-register before hunting. 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.

The instructions here are for submitting lymph nodes for testing. 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.

STEP 1: Package Samples

- 1) After a successful hunt, **please refer to the instructions in Appendix A** for how to remove lymph nodes for testing.
- 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.
- 3) Label the outer bag with hunter's last name and DNR Kill Tag ID (Figures 1 and 2).
- 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 (circled) Kill Tag ID number to be used on submission form.



Figure 2. Deer Damage Permit Tag showing (circled) Kill Tag ID number to be used on submission form.

STEP 2: Order Testing

- 1) Go to the [MSU VDL website](#) and click on **CWD Testing for Michigan Hunters (lymph node submission only)**. Click to 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 (\$15).
- 4) Click to submit.
- 5) Follow the prompts to pay with credit card. Cost for lymph node testing is \$30. Cost for testing with overnight shipping is \$45.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Print the receipt page that includes a bar code and your order information. If submitting samples from more than one animal, be sure to print each receipt page.
- 8) If you selected overnight shipping, a UPS shipping label will be e-mailed to you.

STEP 3: Getting Samples to the Laboratory

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 receipt (with bar code and order information) into a separate zip-top bag and place it in the shipping container with your samples. If submitting samples from more than one animal, please double bag each order receipt separately.
- 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 receipt. 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 fit comfortably.
- 5) Completely seal/tape shut the container and print and attach the shipping label which was e-mailed to you. Follow instructions from UPS.
- 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.

Delivering Samples to the Lab:

- 1) Remove samples from the freezer just before driving to the laboratory.
- 2) Put your order receipt (with bar code and order information) into a separate zip-top bag.
- 3) Place your double-bagged samples and bagged order receipt(s) into a larger zip-top bag.
- 4) Bring samples and order receipt(s) to the MSU VDL, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910. See our website at 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 place lymph node samples in cooler in entryway.
- 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 receipt provided, samples and order receipts double-bagged, and appropriately labeled.

STEP 4: Testing & Getting Results

- 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:

- Please visit Michigan.gov/CWD and click on 'For Hunters' for more references on how to pull lymph nodes for CWD testing.
- Need to contact the MDNR with questions?
 - Cameron Dole, 517.336.5030, DoleC@michigan.gov
 - Katie Farinosi, 517.355.4077, FarinosiK@michigan.gov
- Have questions for the MSU VDL about testing or submitting samples? Please call us at 517.353.1683.

Appendix A. Removing Lymph nodes for CWD Testing Submission

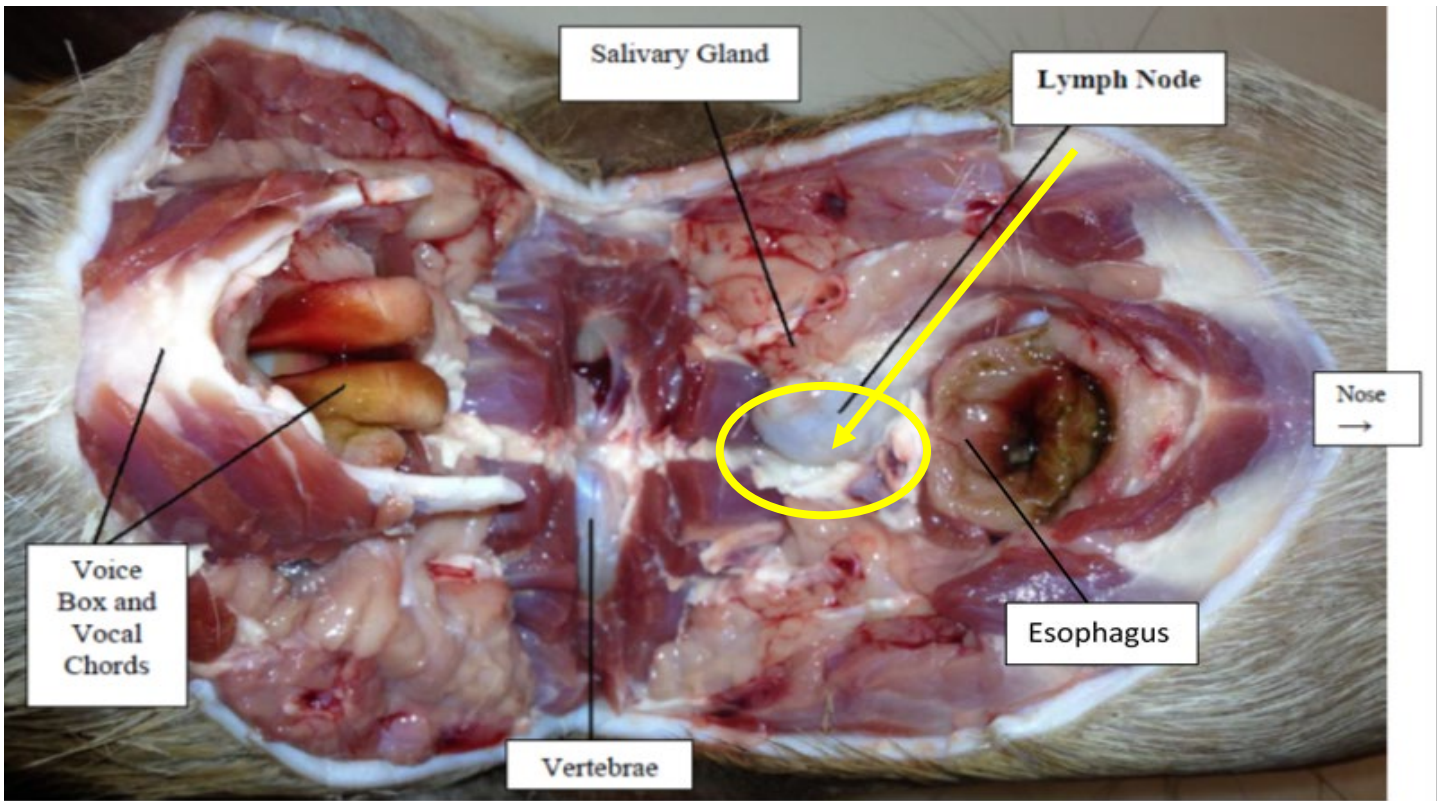
Step 1. Locate the larynx approximately where the neck bends.



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 toward you 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. However, a credit can be applied to the client account for future testing. If you are ever unsure that you are collecting the correct tissue, please refer to the above photos, use the videos listed in the references section, you can cut out that section of the throat shown in Step 3 or you may send the entire head at additional cost.

