

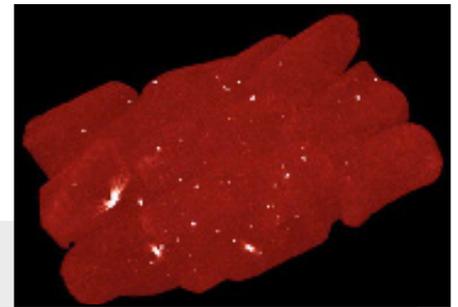
Lead Bullets and Venison

What Every Hunting Family Should Know

Studies show that lead fragments are often found in venison shot with lead bullets.

These pieces of lead are **too small to be seen or felt while chewing**. During processing, lead bullet fragments can get mixed further into the venison. For this reason, ground venison usually has **more** lead fragments than steaks and chops (see photo).

Using a medical imaging device, lead fragments (bright spots) are shown scattered within the ground venison shot with lead bullets.



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.

Even low levels of lead in children can result in:

- Lower IQ scores.
- Decreased academic achievement.
- Increased problems with behavior and attention related disorders.
- Decreased hearing.
- Decreased kidney function.

Along with the health effects listed above, higher levels of lead in children can also result in:

- Anemia.
- Severe stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and/or constipation.
- Muscle weakness or soreness.
- Severe damage to the brain, nervous system and kidneys.

Reduce the risk of lead exposure from venison.

If you harvest deer with high-velocity lead bullets, people who are nursing, pregnant or can become pregnant and children ages 6 and under should avoid eating that venison.

Older children and adults should eat ground venison shot with lead bullets in moderation. Try using whole cuts (like steaks and chops) of venison rather than ground meat. Ground venison tends to have more lead fragments.

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.

Choose ammunition that will not leave lead fragments in the meat.

Worst	Better	Best
Rapidly expanding bullet. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ballistic tip.- Soft point.	Shotgun slug. Muzzleloader bullet. Non-exposed lead core bullet.	Copper bullet. Lead-free bullet.
These bullets leave the most lead fragments in the meat. The lead can be found throughout the meat, not just along the wound channel.	These fragment much less due to slower velocity, higher mass or a metal completely covering the lead. However, there is still some risk of lead fragments.	Copper and lead-free bullets leave no lead in the meat.

If you use high-velocity lead bullets, here are some ways to remove or reduce lead fragments:

- **Place your shots carefully.** Shots that go through large bones, like the hindquarters of a deer, elk or bear, will fragment more than shots in soft tissue.
- **Fragments are often found farther from the wound channel than expected.** This makes it impossible to recommend a safe distance for trimming. However, liberally trimming around the wound channel should remove some fragments.
- **Do not rinse the carcass.** Rinsing the meat will not necessarily remove lead fragments. It may spread lead fragments to other parts of the animal, causing more of the meat to have lead.
- **Ground venison has been found to have more lead fragments.** Venison steaks and chops usually contain less lead.
- Some commercial processors combine several deer. Venison that contains lead fragments could be mixed into venison that you receive. **Ask the processor not to combine meat from other deer with yours.**
- Acids make it easier for the human body to absorb lead. **Avoid using acidic substances** (like vinegar or wine) when cooking venison.

For more information about lead:

Call MDHHS at 800-648-6942

or visit Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe.