



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local News Media

From: Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director, Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Safety of Michigan's Venison

Release Date: October 1, 2012

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has released information about a serious disease affecting white-tailed deer. The disease is called epizootic hemorrhagic fever (EHF). The cause of the disease is a virus that does NOT affect humans.

The EHF virus is transmitted to deer by the bite of a fly. Cold weather and frost should kill the flies involved in the spread of EHF. Hunters and hikers should not worry about getting EHF if they are bitten by flies.

"We want people to continue to enjoy hunting," said Dr. Robert Graham, medical director of the Mid- and Central Michigan District Health Departments. "There are a few things that I recommend when you go hunting to protect yourself from other potential infections," Graham noted.

Until there is a frost that kills mosquitoes, flies, and ticks, hunters should wear long sleeves and long pants to reduce the chance of an insect bite that could possibly transmit West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

Mosquitoes that transmit West Nile Virus are more active in the early morning and evening. A mosquito net will help protect your head and neck.

After being in the woods you should inspect your skin for any ticks that may have attached themselves to your skin. Tick bites can spread Lyme disease. "Strip down and check your legs and arms and have someone check your back for ticks" advises Dr. Graham.

If you see a deer in the woods that is not eating, is walking erratically, frothing from the mouth, and looking starved you should consider the deer possibly infected with EHF. If you take the deer and it is infected with EHF you can still eat the meat.

Properly butchered, packaged, and cooked venison is a nutritious source of protein. If you are unsure about the meat from a deer, you can make the meat safer to eat by bringing it up to a minimal temperature of 165 degrees for five minutes.

This article is brought to you by the staff at Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves residents in the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Join us (Central Michigan District Health Department) on Facebook or visit our website at www.cmdhd.org.

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