

HUNTING

Wild game provides a major source of vitamin A, C, calcium, iron, and protein and is beneficial to your health. However, wild game can be contaminated by chemical contaminants or natural toxins, parasites and bacteria. In addition, once the animal is killed there is an increased risk of contamination associated with the handling of the meat from the time it is caught to when it is prepared. Some game (e.g. bears, hares) are recognized as hosts of certain parasites or diseases. Eating contaminated wild game can make you sick; therefore game meat should always be thoroughly cooked.



MINIMIZE THE RISK – PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

Here are some things you can do to make sure the game you bring home is safe to eat.

Preparation

Bring these things with you when you go hunting to minimize the risk of contamination and spoilage.

- Steel shots – instead of lead
- Sufficient drinking water
- Sanitizer, or liquid hand soap to clean hands and tools
- Clean cloth or paper towels
- Sharp knives and bone saw
- Rope to hang the carcass
- Gloves
- Cheesecloth
- Cooler

Observing game

On the land, it is important to pay attention to animals' appearance and behaviour in order to identify those that may be sick. Do not kill animals that appear to be sick.

Typical signs of sickness in animals may include:

- General poor physical condition (e.g., animal appears weak, sluggish, or have weight loss)
- Swellings or lumps
- Hair loss
- Blood, or discharges from the nose or mouth
- Abnormal behaviour, like aggressiveness



Handling game

Here are some simple things you can do to reduce the risks when handling wild game.

- Wash and sanitize all equipment used to handle game before and after use.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water to a slow count of 20 before and after handling game.
- Wear heavy duty or cut resistant gloves when handling wild animals to avoid contamination. This is especially important when handling small game like muskrat or waterfowl, or animals that appear to be sick or are acting abnormally.
- Bleed and remove the intestines and stomach as quickly as possible.
- Cool the carcass by keeping the chest open or by cutting the carcass in halves, quarters or smaller pieces.
- Keep hide on the animal to protect the meat and transport the carcass in a well-ventilated car, keeping it cool and covered until you reach home.

All game should be gutted and refrigerated within a few hours of the hunt to avoid spoilage.

Remember, never handle or eat an animal that has died from unknown causes.

For additional information and for the recommended minimum internal cooking temperatures, talk to your local Environmental Health Officer or visit HealthyCanadians.gc.ca/FirstNationsFoodSafety.



Once the game meat has been brought home:

- *Refrigerate at 4°C (40°F) or lower and use within 2-3 days.*
- *Freeze at -18°C (0°F) or lower for later use.*
- *Cook to the recommended minimum internal temperature to kill any parasites or bacteria that may be present.*

