

Chronic Wasting Disease Testing Program Termination

- Effective October 31, 2026 the Ministry of Environment will end the CWD testing program. This applies to the broader hunter testing program, not only mandatory testing.
- Government is always looking at efficiencies and since uptake across our hunters has been low, we see this as an opportunity for efficiency.
- Samples from mandatory testing zones that are submitted on or before October 31, 2026 will be processed. Samples from voluntary submission zones will not be tested; hunters will be informed on October 15. CWD sample drop-off kiosks will be closed November 2, 2026.
- Saskatchewan continues to recognize Chronic Wasting Disease as an important wildlife-health issue. The decision to end government-funded testing does not mean CWD has disappeared or that it is no longer important to wildlife management decisions.
- The ministry will complete the final surveillance report, and continue clinically suspect animal reporting, carcass-handling and consumption advice and emergency wildlife health responses.
- Current information will be available at [Saskatchewan.ca/cwd](https://saskatchewan.ca/cwd) and through the Ministry of Environment Inquiry Centre.

Questions and Answers

Why is government terminating the CWD surveillance program?

- Government is always looking at efficiencies and since uptake across our hunters has been low, we see this as an opportunity for efficiency.

What is the timeline?

- Effective October 31, 2026 the Ministry of Environment will end the CWD testing program. This applies to the broader hunter testing program, not only mandatory testing.

Testing

Can I get my sample tested after October 31, 2026?

- The Government of Saskatchewan will no longer offer this service after October 31, 2026.
- Only samples from heads harvested in mandatory submission WMZs on or prior to October 31, 2026, will be processed and tested, pending adequate funding.

Will hunters be able to pay out-of-pocket for CWD testing?

- The government will not offer a fee-for-service testing option and the ministry is not currently aware of any commercial laboratories that offer private, direct-to-consumer testing for CWD in wildlife.

Food Safety

What can I do with the carcass if I am uncomfortable eating it without confirmation it is CWD negative?

Under The Wildlife Regulations, Section 22:

- (1) A person who has killed or is in possession of any game other than a bear or wolf shall not allow its edible flesh to be wasted, destroyed, spoiled or abandoned.
- (2) A person who kills or injures any game shall make every reasonable effort to retrieve the game and include it in his or her lawful limit.

Hunters who are uncomfortable consuming harvested meat without confirmation it is CWD negative may choose to:

- Forfeit their hunting opportunity;
- Gift the meat to another person who is comfortable consuming untested meat; or
- Feed meat that is thoroughly cooked to pets.

Is it safe to eat the meat from my harvested animal?

- There have been no documented cases of CWD in humans and the risk of transmission from consuming wild meat is considered low by public health agencies.
- The risk of harvesting an infected animal ranges depending on the region of the province. Hunters can assess their risks by visiting saskatchewan.ca/cwd to review known CWD prevalence rates across the province based on historical data.

Will any disease surveillance continue?

- Yes, the ministry will continue to monitor diseases, including CWD, through testing clinically suspect animals.

Licences

My licence says it is mandatory to turn in my (or my client's) sample, what do I do?

- On October 15, hunters that have purchased licences in mandatory zones will receive correspondence indicating they will no longer be required to submit heads for testing after October 31, 2026.

Can I get a refund on my licence? I am not comfortable eating untested meat and now that testing is no longer available, I do not wish to hunt.

- Refunds will not be provided to hunters who no longer wish to hunt, nor will pool status be reinstated.
- The Government of Saskatchewan also does not provide compensation for big game meat that is considered inedible. This includes replacement licences or financial refunds.
- Hunters who are uncomfortable eating untested meat have options to utilize the meat (see above).

How will the discontinuation of the program affect wildlife management?

- While the discontinuation of the CWD head testing program will reduce one source of information available to wildlife managers, the ministry will continue to monitor wildlife health and populations using a variety of other management tools and information sources.
- Wildlife managers will continue to take a precautionary approach to wildlife management and may adjust hunting seasons and quotas to support healthy and sustainable wildlife populations.