

## SARS-CoV-2 in Deer in Ontario

April 29, 2022

Dear Neyaashiinigi Residents,

In today's newsletter, we informed the community about the following information.

The Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry has provided Nawash with results of a recent study which **found the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in 17 white-tailed deer from southwestern Ontario.**

There has been a probable case of **transmission of the virus from a deer to a human.** The Ministry is recommending to anyone handling wildlife to take precautions and follow health and safety recommendations when handling and processing wildlife, including:

- maintain up-to-date vaccinations for COVID-19
- process harvested wildlife outdoors or in a well-ventilated area
- wear a well-fitted mask, disposable gloves and eye protection
- avoid splashing fluids from wildlife, especially respiratory tissues
- wash hands or use hand sanitizer after handling live wildlife or carcasses and after removing gloves
- clean and sanitize equipment and surfaces between uses
- keep pets/hunting dogs away from carcasses and discarded tissues
- don't consume wildlife that appears sick or was found dead from unknown causes
- don't feed wildlife - it can spread disease
- don't work with wildlife if you think you may have COVID-19

The Ministry would like to stress that there is **currently no known risk** of eating **venison if food safety recommendations** such as those developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada are followed. Although the live virus has not been found in meat, if present, the virus would be killed at the recommended internal cooking temperature of 74°C (165°F).

More information about the study, SARS-CoV-2 and animals, safe handling and consumption can be found at:

- [Research study](#)
- [Animals and COVID-19](#)
- [Wildlife & SARS-CoV-2 handling guidelines](#)
- [Food safety recommendations](#)

**Questions or concerns** regarding public health should be directed to the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

Should you have any questions regarding the Ontario study results, you may contact: **Anne McCarthy** at 1-888-574-6656