

HUNTERDON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO Box 2900, Flemington, New Jersey 08822
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INFORMATION: Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease of White-Tailed Deer

To: Veterinarians, Animal Control Officers and Local Boards of Health

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Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease of White-Tailed Deer

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) is a highly fatal viral disease of white-tailed deer. The first outbreak of EHD occurred in New Jersey in August of 1955 and killed an estimated 500 – 700 deer. The disease is spread between deer via the bite of *C. variipennis*, known commonly as the biting midge or “no see-um.” Cattle have also been found susceptible to the disease, but cases are mainly limited to deer. **Domestic pets and humans are typically not affected by EHD.**

Symptoms we would see for EHD include excessive salivation and nasal discharges, decreased fear of humans, and gravitation towards bodies of water. These symptoms are very similar in appearance to those of rabies; with the distinct difference that animals with EHD seek water, while rabid animals are hydrophobic.

This disease is not transmissible to people and is not considered a public health concern. Clinical signs may mimic rabies, so if a person is exposed to a deer that looks like it has EHD, the deer should be tested for rabies. An exposure is a bite (any penetration of the skin by teeth) OR saliva or brain/spinal cord tissue introduced an open wound, abrasion, or scratch in the skin (those that have bled in the past 24 hours), or into mucous membranes (eyes), from a known or suspect rabid animal.

Residents reporting deer infected with EHD or rabies should be advised to keep themselves, other people and pets away from the affected animal (Standard for ANY wildlife).

The NJDHSS Guide to Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis, including the definition of an exposure, can be found on the internet:

http://bio.co.hunterdon.nj.us/rabies/Algorithm_Wild_Animals_7-21-10.101503.pdf. END

For questions regarding this information, please contact the
Hunterdon County Health Department at
(908) 788-1351 or health@co.hunterdon.nj.us