

Can Tuberculosis Be Transmitted From Deer to Humans?

Folks who work closely with certain animals, such as wild bison, elk and deer, should be screened regularly for bovine TB.

October 1, 2019 By [Alicia Green](#)

A new [report](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified an infected deer as the carrier of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in the case of a 77-year-old Michigan man who contracted this potentially serious infectious lung disease in 2017, [CNN](#) reports.

A veteran hunter of 20 years, the man had stalked deer in the same area where two other hunters were infected more than 15 years before. Experts believe that the man likely inhaled bovine tuberculosis pathogens while removing a dead deer's infected organs. (Bovine TB is caused by a mycobacterium that can make humans sick.)

Although this rare form of TB has mostly been eliminated in commercial cattle, wild bison, elk and deer still carry the disease. (The disease accounts for less than 2% of total TB cases in the United States.) Symptoms of bovine TB include severe cough, fever, weight loss and chest pain, which are all typical symptoms of common tuberculosis.

Usually, people contract bovine tuberculosis by eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products. But it can sometimes be passed from an infected animal to humans through direct contact with an open wound while they're hunting or killing the animal.

The CDC says the average risk of people contracting bovine TB is low. But the agency suggests that folks who work closely with potential carrier animals and those who consume raw dairy products be screened for TB regularly.

Bovine tuberculosis is treated in almost the exact same way as common TB. The only exception is that the illness resists pyrazinamide, one antibiotic used to treat the disease.

Earlier this month, the CDC warned chicken owners to stop kissing, hugging and sharing their homes with these animals after findings showed 13% of folks who contracted salmonella admitted having engaged in these activities .

Click [here](#) to learn about the new Food and Drug Administration-approved treatment for highly

resistant TB.

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