



# Bovine Tuberculosis in White-Tailed Deer

## What is it?

**Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) is the most infectious type of TB, able to infect most mammals. It is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*, and often affects the respiratory system of mammals. Historically, it is a very rare disease occurring in white-tailed deer. The threat of humans contracting TB from animals today is very remote. TB has not been detected in white tailed deer in Indiana as of 2008.**



## How does it affect deer?

**TB is a chronic and progressive disease that can cause gradual debilitation and emaciation, coughing, nasal discharge, and difficulty breathing. Small lesions or abscesses may be visible inside the chest cavity, covering the lungs, liver, and ribcage in late developed individuals. Many individuals in the early stages of TB may not have any symptoms. Because it is a slow progressing disease, it does not have an important impact on herd dynamics.**



## How does it occur?

**TB is spread through the respiratory secretions between infected and uninfected individuals. Transmission typically is more common when animals are in close proximity to one another. Studies have shown that TB can exist in the environment for 18-332 days in 54-75 F temperatures, however, it is difficult to isolate TB from pastures where infected animals have grazed.**

## What should we do?

**Always wear gloves when field dressing your deer. If you encounter any deer having symptoms similar to TB, contact your local wildlife biologist or animal health center immediately.**

