

Almost 50% of America's eagles are suffering from lead poisoning

Lead in wild harvested game

Eating game meat harvested with lead bullets increases the risk of lead poisoning. Lead bullets easily fragment when they strike an animal, and people can unintentionally eat them in processed game meat.

Children and pregnant people are more vulnerable to lead poisoning and should not eat any game harvested with lead bullets. The number one thing hunters can do to protect themselves and their families is to only use lead-free ammunition.



Lead poisoning

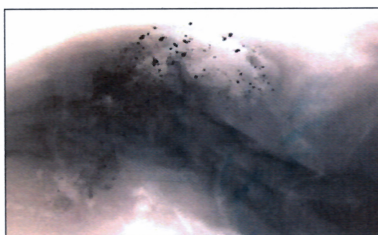
- » Lead poisoning in children happens when they eat or inhale small amounts of lead for a long time. There may be no signs or symptoms until dangerous amounts have accumulated in the body.
- » Does your child need to be tested for lead? Talk to your health care provider or [use this checklist to find out](https://rb.gy/3yognq) (<https://rb.gy/3yognq>)

More information

- » [Health and environmental risks from lead-based ammunition: Science versus socio-politics](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10393-016-1177-x) (doi.org/10.1007/s10393-016-1177-x)
- » [Health risks from lead-based ammunition in the environment—A consensus statement of scientists.](https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1306945) (doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1306945)
- » [Learn about the risk of lead in indoor shooting and fire ranges](https://rb.gy/hmkk0o) (<https://rb.gy/hmkk0o>)
- » [CDPHE Lead and Health web page](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/lead-health) (cdphe.colorado.gov/lead-health)

Tips for hunters

- » For big game, use monolithic copper projectiles for centerfire rifles. These options provide for little to no fragmentation and controlled expansion. Example brands include Barnes TTSX, Hornady GMX, Nosler Etip, and Federal Trophy Copper. Lead-free bullet options for muzzleloaders include Federal BOR Lok and THOR bullets.
- » For turkey and small game, commonly available lead-free shotshell options include steel, bismuth, and tungsten. There are a [number of shot options](https://fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/hunting/nontoxic.php) that do not cause toxicity when birds or wildlife swallow or absorb them. (fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/hunting/nontoxic.php)
- » Hunters who use lead ammunition should choose quality hunting-grade ammunition with a “bonded” or “partition” construction. Avoid frangible bullet types such as “cup and core” or “match” bullets, which fragment more easily.



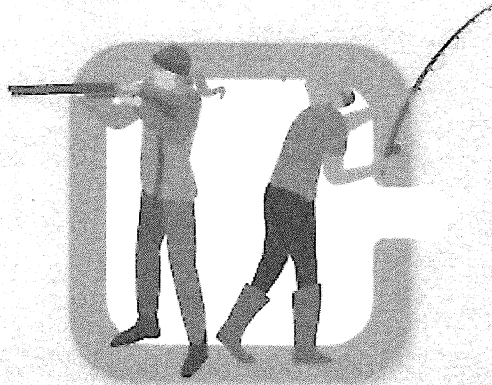
X-ray image showing lead bullet fragments (dark spots) in a mule deer's neck.

- » Ensure commercial meat processors properly clean equipment between animals to avoid lead contamination. All tools and surfaces should be cleaned with hot, soapy water and disinfected with a 10% chlorine bleach solution.

Questions? Contact ToxCall

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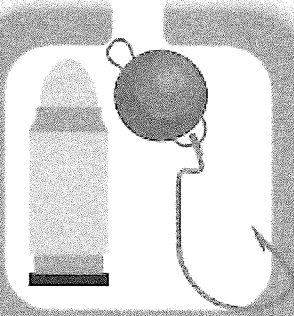
HOW DOES LEAD AFFECT BALD EAGLES?



Legal hunting and fishing support conservation efforts. However, the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle can have unintentional consequences for native wildlife.



Lead enters our ecosystem when gut piles or carcasses are abandoned, when quarry escapes after being shot, or when fish break the line and swim off with tackle.



Going lead-free protects bald eagles and other wildlife. Lead-free alternatives are becoming more affordable, offer greater accuracy, and ensure the highest quality game meat.



A lead fragment the size of a grain of rice is lethal to eagles. Lead accumulates in the system over time, so there is no safe amount of lead exposure.



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“The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado Division of Wildlife provide these recommendations to minimize exposure to lead in wild game:

- Because lead fragments cannot be eliminated with complete certainty, pregnant women and children younger than 6 years of age should avoid eating meat from any game animals harvested with lead bullets. These groups are more sensitive to the health effects of lead, and ingesting even small amounts may be harmful. Lead can affect the development of infants and young children when present at levels well below those that would cause any noticeable signs of illness in a child.”

<https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Hunting/LeadExposureRecommendations.pdf#search=lead%20ammunition>