

Mule Deerpox Virus



CERVIDAE HEALTH
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

What is Deerpox?

Deerpox is caused by a **virus** in the genus *Cervidpoxvirus*. This deer-specific poxvirus is distinct from other pox species but shares similarities with viruses that infect other hoofed mammals.

Symptoms to Watch for

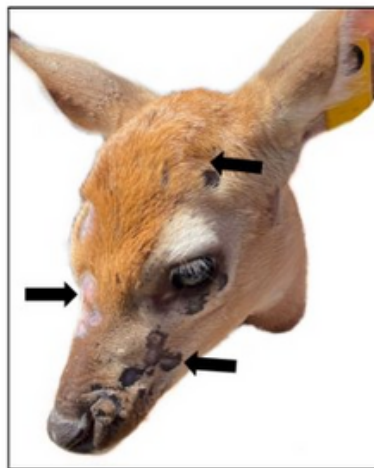
Crusty or ulcerated **skin lesions** are typically found around the face, especially on the **lips, muzzle, ears, eyelids, and nostrils**, as well as in the mouth and on the tongue. **Hooves** and the **coronary band** (where the hoof meets the hairline) may be affected, causing lameness or discomfort. In serious cases, lesions may extend internally (e.g., esophagus, rumen), causing weight loss, lethargy, and secondary infections.

Biosecurity protocols:

- **Isolate** suspected or infected animals immediately. Wear gloves or thoroughly wash hands in between touching deer or pens.
- **Disinfect** all equipment that comes in contact with fawns including bottle, water buckets, ear tags, etc. with bleach (1% with 10 minute contact time or 10% with 1 minute contact time), or an alternative like non-bleach Clorox (alcohol is NOT effective)
- **Control** pests and insects. while insect transmission has not been confirmed, best pest management practices could help prevent the spread of DPV
- **Maintain** clean pens. DPV has been detected in soil and feces. while transmission through soil or feces has not been confirmed, maintaining clean pens could help prevent the spread of the virus
- **Screen** and quarantine new deer before introducing them to the herd.

Who is Most Affected?

Fawns (0-3 months) appear particularly vulnerable, with increased disease severity and even death when lesions lead to complications



Treatment & Control Measures

No specific antiviral treatment or vaccine is currently available. Reach out to your veterinarian for specific treatment options. **Supportive care** is essential: keep fawns hydrated and nourished.

Is It Dangerous to Humans or Other Livestock?

No human infections from Mule Deerpox Virus have been documented but wearing **protective gear** when handling lesions is advised. The virus is specific to deer and does not affect other domestic livestock.

How Is It Diagnosed?

Clinical observation of characteristic lesions.

Laboratory analysis: **PCR** testing of tissue or swabs.

Why it Matters

Deerpox can cause high illness rates in young deer.

Prompt recognition of symptoms, early veterinary care, and **preventive measures** to limit transmission are key to protecting fawns and reducing the risk of death.

Free Diagnostic Testing for
Florida Deer Farmers:
Call or Text 352-562-3337

UF | IFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Email: ufifas.cheri@gmail.com

EHD Hotline Phone: 352-562-DEER

X: @UF_IFAS_CHeRI

