

Peruke Antlers

The abnormal growth of these moose antlers is due to a lack of testosterone at a time when antlers should harden. Instead they grow abnormally and never shed their velvet. The antlers retain blood flow and eventually become frost bitten. In the spring, new antlers try to grow from around the base of the retained antler.



Causes:

- **Any injury or birth defect affecting the testicles or;**
- **When the testes do not descend into the scrotum or form normally (“Cryptorchidism”) or;**
- **A cyst in the pituitary gland.**

Frequency:

This abnormality occurs at different rates in all deer species.

- **Most common in roe deer (almost 2% in Sweden).**
- **Reported in 1 to 2 moose per hunting season in Alaska.**
- **Rarely reported in Sitka black-tailed deer.**

Consequences:

Animals with peruke antlers cannot reproduce and many will die of infections due to retaining frost bitten antlers.

Meat Edibility:

Does not effect the edibility of the meat.

The name comes from the peruke wigs of old English aristocracy. In whitetails and mule deer the condition is called ‘cactus antlers’.