Catch the Latest Advice
health.ny.gov/fish

MAP INSIDE

WESTERN REGION

Health Advice on Eating Fish You Catch

for Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming, and Chautauqua Counties

Why We Have Advisories

Fishing is fun and fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Fish contain high quality protein, essential nutrients, healthy fish oils and are low in saturated fat. However, some fish contain chemicals at levels that may be harmful to health. To help people make healthier choices about which fish they eat, the New York State Department of Health issues advice about eating sportfish (fish you catch). The health advice about which fish to eat depends on:

Where You Fish (see inside map)

Fish from waters that are close to industrial sources are more likely to be contaminated than fish from other waters. **In the western region, Lake Erie fish are generally less contaminated than Lake Ontario fish.** This is because Lake Ontario has been more affected by certain industrial chemicals. Salmon, trout and other fish are known to move from lakes into tributaries, such as Oak Orchard Creek. The lake advice also applies to its tributaries up to the first barrier that stops fish from moving upstream, such as a dam or waterfall.

Who You Are

Women of childbearing age (under 50) and children under 15 are advised to limit the kinds of fish they eat and how often they eat them. Women who eat highly contaminated fish and become pregnant may have an increased risk of having children who are slower to develop and learn. Chemicals may have a greater effect on the development of young children or unborn babies. Also, some chemicals may be passed on in mother's milk.

Women beyond their childbearing years and men may face fewer health risks from some chemicals. For that reason, the advice for women over age 50 and men over age 15 allows them to eat more kinds of sportfish and more often (see inside table).

What You Catch

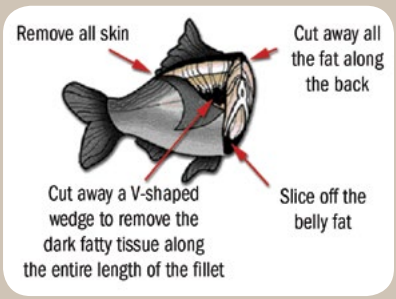
There is specific advice about limiting or not eating certain kinds of fish in the western region (see inside table). Some species (kinds of fish) have higher levels of chemicals than others. In general, smaller fish are less contaminated than larger, older fish of the same species. You can also choose fish from waterbodies that are not listed on the table inside, and follow the general advice to eat up to four meals per month.

Health Risks

The primary chemicals of concern in the western region are PCBs, dioxin and mirex. These chemicals build up in your body over time. Health problems that may result from chemicals in fish range from small changes in health that are hard to detect to birth defects and cancer. (Visit www.health.ny.gov/fish for more info.)

Tips for Healthier Eating

- PCBs, dioxin and mirex are found at higher levels in the fat of fish. Reduce fat by properly trimming, skinning and cooking your catch:



- Cooking or soaking fish cannot eliminate the chemicals, but heat from cooking melts some of the fat. Broil, grill or bake the trimmed, skinned fish on a rack so that the fat drips away. Do not use drippings in sauces or gravies.
- To reduce exposures to PCBs, dioxin and mirex, avoid or eat less American eel, carp, lake trout, salmon, channel catfish and white perch, because these western region fish tend to have higher levels of these contaminants.
- Try to space out your fish meals. For example, if the advice is that you can eat up to four meals a month, don't eat them all in the same week. This is particularly important for women and young children.
- Bacteria, viruses or parasites can be in or on fish. Keep harvested fish cold. Wear gloves when skinning and trimming. Wash hands and surfaces often when preparing fish, and keep raw foods separate. Cook fish and shellfish thoroughly before eating.

COMMON FISH OF THE WESTERN REGION

Bluegill

Brown bullhead

Brown trout

Burbot

Carp

Channel catfish

Chinook salmon

Coho salmon

Crappie

Freshwater drum

Lake trout

Lake whitefish

Largemouth bass

Rainbow trout

Rock bass

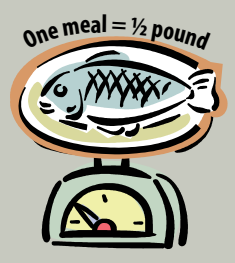
Smallmouth bass

Walleye

White perch

White sucker

Yellow perch



Visit www.health.ny.gov/fish for the latest information about fish advisories.

The health advice about which fish to eat depends on where you fish, who you are and what you catch.

Because chemicals remain in fish even if they move from one waterbody to another, the advice applies to tributaries and connected waters if there are no dams, falls, or barriers to stop the fish from moving upstream.

If you are not sure about possible fish barriers near waters where you are fishing, call your DEC office listed on the back of this brochure.

Location & Tributaries *(Chemical of Concern)*	**Fish**	**Men Over 15 & Women Over 50**	**Women Under 50 & Children Under 15**
All waters NOT listed (Western Region)	All fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
Buffalo River and Harbor *(PCBs)*	Channel catfish	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	Carp	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Cayuga Creek *(Dioxin)*	All fish	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
Delaware Park Lake/Hoyt Lake *(PCBs)*	Carp	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Eighteenmile Creek, above and below Burt Dam *(PCBs)*	All fish	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
Erie Canal between Lockport & Niagara River *(PCBs)*	Carp	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Lake Erie *(PCBs)*	Rock bass, Yellow perch, Burbot	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
	Carp, Channel catfish	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 1 meal/month
Lake Ontario * *(PCBs, Mirex, Dioxin)*	White sucker	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	White perch	East of Point Breeze, up to 1 meal/month; West of Point Breeze, DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Lake trout	Greater than 25", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 25", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	Carp, Channel catfish	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Brown trout	Greater than 20", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 20", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Lewiston Reservoir/Power Reservoir *(PCBs)*	Carp	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Niagara River upstream of Niagara Falls *(PCBs)*	Same advice as **Lake Erie**		
Niagara River downstream Niagara Falls * *(PCBs, Mirex, Dioxin)*	**Lake Ontario** advice		
	and Smallmouth bass	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT

** Harvest/possession of Lake Ontario American eel is prohibited per DEC Regulations*

Fish from Stores and Restaurants

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the sale of commercial fish in markets. Due to concerns about mercury, FDA advises pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children to avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish.

Food and Drug Administration: (888) SAFEFOOD, (888) 723-3366

More Information

New York State Fish Advisories

Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov/fish
(518) 402-7800
(800) 458-1158
email BTSA@health.state.ny.us

Other Fish Information

Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/ost/fish

Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm110591.htm

New York State Fishing

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html

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