

Catch the Latest Advice

health.ny.gov/fish

Leatherstocking/ Central Region

MAP INSIDE

Health Advice on Eating Fish You Catch



Including Chenango, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida,
Otsego, Schoharie, and parts of Herkimer Counties

Why We Have Advice

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 affected by industrial sources are more likely to be contaminated than fish from other waters. **In the Leatherstocking/Central Region, for example, fish from Oneida Lake are generally less contaminated than fish from the Mohawk River.**

This is because Oneida Lake has been less affected by certain industrial chemicals. If you're planning a fish meal, please read the section *Where can the whole family eat the fish?* inside this brochure.

Some fish are known to move from lakes and rivers into tributaries, such as from Unadilla River into Butternut Creek. The lake and river advice also applies to its tributaries up to the first barrier that stops fish from moving upstream or downstream, 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 developing fetuses. 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 some of this region's waterbodies (see inside table). Some 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 to eat fish

from waters not listed in the inside table and follow the general advice to eat up to four meals per month.

Health Risks

The primary chemicals of concern in the Leatherstocking/Central Region are PCBs and mercury. 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.)

COMMON FISH OF THE LEATHERSTOCKING/CENTRAL REGION



Brook trout



Brown bullhead



Brown trout



Carp



Chain pickerel



Channel catfish



Fallfish



Freshwater drum



Largemouth bass



Northern pike



Pumpkinseed/Sunfish



Rainbow trout



Rock bass



Smallmouth bass



Tiger muskellunge



Walleye



White bass



White perch



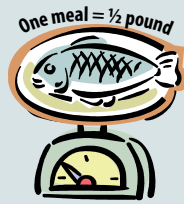
White sucker



Yellow perch

Tips for Healthier Eating

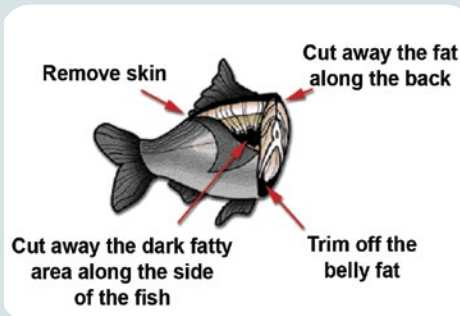
- Try to space out your fish meals. For example, if the advice is that you can eat up to four meals a month, don't eat them all in the same week. This is particularly important for women and young children.



- 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.

Tips to Reduce PCBs

- PCBs 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 avoid or eat less carp, channel catfish, lake trout, salmon (chinook, coho), and white perch because these fish tend to have higher levels of these contaminants.

Tips to Avoid Mercury

- The only way to reduce how much mercury you get from fish is to avoid certain species or eat smaller fish within a species.
- To reduce exposures to mercury, avoid or eat less largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, pickerel, walleye, and larger yellow perch (for example, longer than 10 inches) because these fish tend to have higher mercury levels.

- Mercury is distributed throughout a fish's muscle tissue (the part you eat), rather than in the fat and skin. Trimming and skinning will not reduce the amount of mercury in a fish meal.



Location & Tributaries
(Chemical of Concern)



Fish



**Men Over 15 &
Women Over 50**



**Women Under 50 &
Children Under 15**

All waters NOT listed (Finger Lakes Region)	All fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
Chenango River (Mercury)	Walleye	Greater than 22", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 22", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Delta Lake (Mercury)	Walleye	Greater than 23", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 23", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Goodyear Lake (Mercury)	Walleye	Greater than 22", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 22", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Mohawk River/Erie Canal, from Feeder Dam 1 on Mohawk River and Lock E21 at New London to Lock E20 at Whitesboro (PCBs)	Carp	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	White sucker ¹ , Yellow Perch ¹	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 1 meals/month
Mohawk River/Erie Canal, between Lock E20 at Whitesboro and Lock E18 at Jacksonburg (PCBs)	Carp, Largemouth bass, Smallmouth bass, Tiger muskellunge, White sucker	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Walleye	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 1 meal/month
Mohawk River/Erie Canal, between Lock E18 at Jacksonburg and Fivemile Dam below Little Falls (PCBs)	Carp	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Rock bass ¹	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
	Walleye	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 1 meal/month
Mohawk River/Erie Canal, between Fivemile Dam (downstream of Little Falls) and Cohoes Falls (Albany County) (PCBs)	Carp	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	Brown bullhead ¹ , Bluegill ¹ , Blueback herring ¹ , Rock bass ¹ , Smallmouth bass ¹ , Walleye ¹ , Yellow perch ¹	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 1 meal/month
Mud Creek, tributary to Sauquoit Creek (PCBs)	Brown trout, White sucker	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Sauquoit Creek, between Old Silk Mill Dam near New Hartford/Paris town line and Mohawk River (PCBs)	Brown trout, White sucker	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Sixmile Creek, downstream of Gulf Road to mouth of Mohawk River (PFAS, PCBs)	All fish	DON'T EAT	DON'T EAT
Susquehanna River (Mercury)	Walleye	Greater than 22", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 22", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT

¹These fish are a good choice for the whole family. See www.health.ny.gov/fish/background.htm for more information about how advisories are set.



Where can the whole family eat the fish?

The Leatherstocking/Central Region has great fishing. Everyone in the family can follow the general advice and enjoy up to four fish meals a month from any waters in this region not listed in the table at left, such as **Oneida Lake, Cazenovia Lake, Canadarago Lake, Otsego Lake, Chittenango Creek, and Schoharie Creek (downstream/north of Lower Blenheim-Gilboa Reservoir Dam)**.

These lakes and streams are just examples of fishing spots where the four meals a month general advice applies. Remember to check for specific advice like that listed in the table if you plan on eating the fish you catch. If you have questions about health advice for your favorite waterbody call the fish advisory team at (518) 402-7800.

What about tributaries and connected waters?

The specific advice in the table applies to tributaries and connected waters if there are no dams, falls, or barriers to stop the fish from moving upstream or downstream. This is because chemicals remain in fish when they move from one waterbody to another. 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.

Specific advice, continued:

Location & Tributaries (Chemical of Concern)	Fish	Men Over 15 & Women Over 50	Women Under 50 & Children Under 15
Threemile Creek (PCBs)	White sucker	Up to 1 meal/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
Unadilla River (Mercury)	Walleye	Greater than 22", up to 1 meal/month; Less than 22", up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT
	All other fish	Up to 4 meals/month	DON'T EAT

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, the FDA and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advise pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children to avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tuna (bigeye), marlin, orange roughy, and tilefish.

Visit www.fda.gov/fishadvice or www.epa.gov/fishadvice for more information.

More Information

New York State Fish Advisories

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

New York State Fishing

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

DEC Region 4

(Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie
counties)
(607) 652-7366
fwfish4@dec.ny.gov

New York State Fishing, cont.

DEC Region 6

(Herkimer and Oneida counties)
Utica Office
(315) 793-2554
fwfish6@dec.ny.gov

DEC Region 7

(Chenango and Madison counties)
Cortland Sub-Office
(607) 753-3095
fwfish7@dec.ny.gov

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Jim Root Fishing