This pamphlet will give you information that will help your family avoid chemicals in fish and eat fish safely.

Fish from Connecticut’s waters are a healthy, low-cost source of protein. Unfortunately, some fish take up chemicals such as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). These chemicals can build up in your body and increase health risks. The developing fetus and young children are most sensitive. Women who eat fish containing these chemicals before or during pregnancy or nursing may have children who are slow to develop and learn. Long term exposure to PCBs may increase cancer risk.

### What Does The Fish Consumption Advisory Say?

The advisory tells you how often you can safely eat fish from Connecticut’s waters and from a store or restaurant. In many cases, separate advice is given for the High Risk and Low Risk Groups.

- **You are in the High Risk Group** if you are a pregnant woman, a woman who could become pregnant, a nursing mother, or a child under six.
- **If you do not fit into the High Risk Group**, you are in the Low Risk Group.

Advice is given for three different types of fish consumption:

1. **Statewide FRESHWATER Fish Advisory.** Most freshwater fish in Connecticut contain enough mercury to cause some limit to consumption. The statewide freshwater advice is that:
   - **High Risk Group:** eat no more than 1 meal per month
   - **Low Risk Group:** eat no more than 1 meal per week

2. **Advisories for SPECIFIC WATERBODIES.** Certain waterbodies contain fish with higher levels of contaminants. These waterbodies include the Housatonic River, part of the Quinnipiac River, certain lakes, and certain species from Long Island Sound. The large chart in the center of this pamphlet provides details on eating fish safely from these waterbodies.

3. **Advice for Fish Purchased from the MARKET.** Most fish from the market are healthy to eat and contain important nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids. However, there are some fish that contain high levels of mercury or PCBs and so should be eaten less or not at all. This pamphlet points out which fish are healthy to eat and which ones are not safe to eat (small chart on page 3).

### Are Trout Safe To Eat?

Most trout from Connecticut's rivers are safe to eat because they usually have little contamination and are routinely re-stocked. However, there are limits on trout from certain waterbodies due to PCBs and on large trout from lakes due to mercury (see large chart in center).

### What About Fish from Markets and Restaurants?

Many fish from the market or restaurant are low in contaminants. Some of these fish are also high in omega-3 fatty acids, a nutrient oil from fish that improves brain development and helps prevent heart disease. However, some fish from the market can contain high levels of certain contaminants, especially mercury.

In general, people in the High Risk Group can eat up to 2 fish meals a week from the market or restaurants. Certain fish are especially low in contaminants and can be eaten more often. The following are specific tips for those in the High Risk Group to choose healthy fish from the store:

- **Swordfish and Shark:** these contain high levels of mercury and should not be eaten.
- **Canned tuna:** Choose "light" tuna because it has less mercury than "white" tuna.
- **Lobster and other shellfish:** generally low in chemical contaminants. The tomalley portion of lobster (the green gland) can be high in contaminants and should not be eaten. This applies to lobster from Long Island Sound and elsewhere.

### Fish from the Market and Restaurant

The chart below provides general guidance for Women & Children on which fish to choose. Fish with hearts are especially high in omega-3 fatty acids and/or very low in contaminants and can be eaten more than twice a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish from the Market and Restaurant</th>
<th>Eat 1 Meal a Week</th>
<th>Eat 2 Meals a Week</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herring</td>
<td>Trout</td>
<td>Tuna Steak</td>
<td>Swordfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollock</td>
<td>Haddock</td>
<td>Halibut</td>
<td>Shark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon (wild)</td>
<td>Perch</td>
<td>Red Snapper</td>
<td>King Mackerel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Mackerel</td>
<td>Tilapia</td>
<td>White Tuna (canned)</td>
<td>Striped Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder &amp; Fluke</td>
<td>Light tuna (canned)</td>
<td>Cuskfish (farm-raised)</td>
<td>Tilefish (Half of Meat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole</td>
<td>Cod</td>
<td>Tilefish (Atlantic)</td>
<td>Bluefish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardines &amp; Smelt</td>
<td>Salmon (farm-raised)</td>
<td>Tuna Sushi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shelffish: oysters, shrimp, clams, scallops, lobster * see warning above about lobster tomalley

People in the Low Risk Group can safely eat higher amounts of market seafood. For example, swordfish or shark - once per month; tuna steak or halibut - twice per week.

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**How Do These Contaminants Get Into Fish?**

Mercury, PCBs and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) can build up in fish to levels that are thousands of times higher than in the water. These contaminants enter the water from:

- Chemical spills that happen in the past. Even though these spills have been stopped, it will take years for the mercury or PCB levels in the fish to drop to safe levels.
- Mercury in the air. Mercury travels long distances from where it is released. Much of it comes from air pollution outside of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) is working to improve water quality in Connecticut and is limiting the amount of mercury which can be released into the air.

**What Else Can I Do To Eat Fish Safely?**

PCBs are mostly in the fatty portions of fish. It is very important to remove skin and other fatty parts. Cook fish on a rack (broil) so that fat can drip away from the flesh.

- **Remove fatty portions before cooking.**
- **Remove and do not eat the organs, head, skin and the dark fatty tissue along the backbone, lateral lines and belly.**

Mercury is in the edible (filet) portion of fish. Therefore, you cannot lower your exposure to mercury by cooking or cleaning the fish. Large fish usually have the highest levels of PCBs and mercury. If you have a choice, eat smaller fish of any species. In addition, certain smaller species generally have lower levels of contamination (perch, small trout, sunfish).
# 2022 Connecticut Safe Fish Consumption

## STATEWIDE FRESHWATER FISH ADVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbody</th>
<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>High Risk Group</th>
<th>Low Risk Group</th>
<th>Contaminant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All fresh lakes, ponds, rivers &amp; streams</td>
<td>Trout* Sunfish</td>
<td>No Limits on Consumption</td>
<td>No Limits on Consumption</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other freshwater fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SPECIAL ADVICE FOR THE HOUSATONIC RIVER AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbody</th>
<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>High Risk Group</th>
<th>Low Risk Group</th>
<th>Contaminant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housatonic River above Lake Lillinonah</td>
<td>Trout, Catfish, Eels, Carp, Northern Pike</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bass, White Perch</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per 2 months</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bluegill, Bullheads, Fallfish</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellow Perch, Calico Bass</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per week</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes on Housatonic River</td>
<td>(Lillinonah, Zoar, Housatonic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catfish, Eels, Carp, Northern Pike, Trout</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Perch, Fallfish, Bullheads</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per 2 months</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellow Perch, Calico Bass (Crappie), Rock Bass &amp; Sunfish</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per week</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnace Brook (Connecticut)</td>
<td>Trout</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry River below “Blau Furnace” (North Canaan)</td>
<td>Smallmouth Bass</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SPECIAL ADVICE FOR OTHER CT FRESH WATERBODIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbody</th>
<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>High Risk Group</th>
<th>Low Risk Group</th>
<th>Contaminant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dodge Pond Lake McDonough</td>
<td>Largemouth Bass</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Lake Wyassup Lake</td>
<td>Smallmouth Bass, Pickerel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinepicus River (Gorge south to Hanover Pond) Meriden</td>
<td>All Species</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut River</td>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per week</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versailles, Papermill Ponds &amp; attached Little River (Sprague)</td>
<td>All Species</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkapot River (North Canaan)</td>
<td>White Suckers</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breyer Pond (Stratford)</td>
<td>Catfish &amp; Bullheads</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Chlordane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Pond (Manchester)</td>
<td>Carp, Catfish, Bass</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Chlordane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchaug, Willimantic and Shetucket Rivers (Willimantic &amp; Mansfield)</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PFAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockanum River* (Vernon, Ellington, Manchester, &amp; East Hartford)</td>
<td>All Species</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>PFAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SPECIAL ADVICE FOR LONG ISLAND SOUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbody</th>
<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>High Risk Group</th>
<th>Low Risk Group</th>
<th>Contaminant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Island Sound and connected rivers</td>
<td>Striped Bass</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bluefish over 25&quot;</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bluefish 13- 25 &quot;f&quot;</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weakfish</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>One meal per month</td>
<td>PCBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill River, Fairfield (excluding Southport Harbor)</td>
<td>Blue Crab</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Do not eat</td>
<td>Lead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Footnotes from Table:

* The High Risk Group includes pregnant women, women who could become pregnant, nursing women, and children under age 6.

* The High Risk Group should eat no more than one fish meal per month of most freshwater fish from local waters.

* The Low Risk Group should limit eating most freshwater fish to once a week.

* The Low Risk Group should eat no more than one meal of large trout (over 15") per month and should not eat trout from the Housatonic River.

* The Natchaug River from the dam at the Willimantic Reservoir (northern boundary) downstream to where it forms the Shetucket River. The advisory extends a 1/2 mile down the Shetucket River to Plains Road. Willimantic River from where it meets the Shetucket and Natchaug Rivers upstream to the dam at Pine Street.

* Hoosac River from the outlet of Sheepscot Lake (Tolland Ave., Vernon) to the Connecticut River, including several riverine impoundments of Papermill Pond, including Pinney Park (Vernon), Union Pond (Manchester), small impoundments and ponds (East Hartford) and the Connecticut River (upstream to dam at Main Street, Vernon)...

* E. Snappers (bluefish under 13") are not on the advisory because they have very low contamination.

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## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More specific fact sheets can be obtained by calling 1-877-458-FISH (3474), or by going to the DPH WEB SITE: [https://portal.ct.gov/fish](https://portal.ct.gov/fish)

Health Questions?

Call CT DPH toll-free at: 1-877-458-FISH (3474)

Questions about fishing in Connecticut?

Call CT DEEP at 860-424-3474. [www.ct.gov/deep/fishing](http://www.ct.gov/deep/fishing)