



Information about the Statewide Advisory for Eating Fish from California's Lakes and Reservoirs

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency

July 2013

Why did OEHHA develop a statewide advisory for California's lakes and reservoirs?

- To help people make healthy choices about which types of sport fish to eat from lakes and reservoirs that do not have their own advisories.
- To provide health-protective advice while more fish and water bodies are tested and advice specific to those water bodies is developed.

What is the chemical of concern for the statewide advisory?

- Mercury—specifically methylmercury—found in the fish tissue.
- Some fish contain methylmercury at levels that can harm the brain and nervous systems of people, especially unborn babies and children.

How does mercury get into the fish?

- From the food that fish eat. Fish that eat other fish accumulate more mercury. Fish that eat mostly insects accumulate less mercury.
- Mercury in the aquatic environment is the result of mining activities and burning coal.
- Bacteria transform mercury in the sediment to methylmercury, which then accumulates in fish tissue.

How did OEHHA develop the statewide advisory?

- By combining mercury data from fish in California lakes that currently do not have advisories and comparing the mercury levels to acceptable human exposure levels.

What are the recommendations for eating fish from California's lakes and reservoirs?

- For lakes and reservoirs without their own advisories:
 - Follow the statewide recommendations (<http://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories/statewide-advisory-eating-fish-californias-lakes-and-reservoirs-without-site>)
 - Choose fish low in mercury and high in omega-3 fatty acids.
 - Details are in the report "Statewide Health Advisory and Guidelines for Eating Fish from Lakes and Reservoirs Without Site-Specific Advice."
 - Full report (<http://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/fish/advisory/calakeresadvisory080113.pdf>)
- For lakes and reservoirs with advisories:
 - Follow the specific recommendations for each lake or reservoir (Go to oehha.ca.gov, click on "Fish," then "Fish Advisories." Select individual water bodies from the list.)
 - To view a map of all advisories use the link above map symbol below the list of water bodies,

or open the hyperlink embedded here



Will OEHHA develop any more lake- or reservoir-specific advisories?

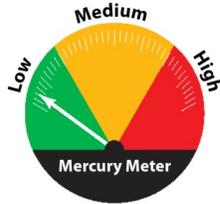
- Yes, OEHHA will continue to develop advice for individual water bodies that have suitable data.
- OEHHA will coordinate with the state's regional water boards and other groups on the sampling and testing of fish for chemicals.

Where can I find more information about OEHHA's guidelines for eating fish?

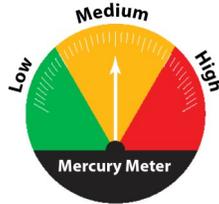
- Call OEHHA at (916) 323-7319 or (510) 622-3170, or visit www.oehha.ca.gov (click on "FISH").
- Freshwater or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets are available from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, or www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations.
- A fact sheet on methylmercury in sport fish is available at OEHHA's website OEHHA at www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/hg/index.html.

A Healthy Guide to Eating Fish from Lakes and Reservoirs without Site-Specific Advice

Women 18-45 years and children 1-17 years



Rainbow trout



Bullhead



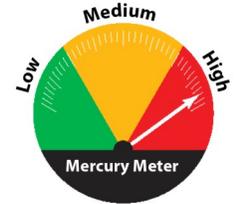
Catfish



Bluegill or other sunfish



Brown trout
16 inches or less



Bass



Carp



Brown trout
over 16 inches

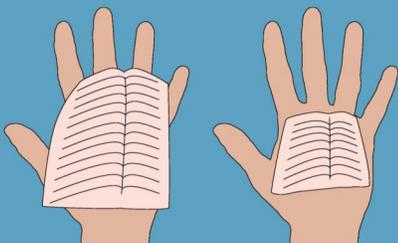
♥ = High in Omega-3s

2 servings a week



1 serving a week

Do not eat



For Adults For Children

The recommended serving is the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

♥ Why eat fish?

Eating fish is good for your health. Fish have Omega-3s that can reduce your risk for heart disease and improve how the brain develops in unborn babies and children.

What is the concern?

Some fish have high levels of mercury. Mercury can harm the brain, especially in unborn babies and children. Women over 45 years and men have lower risk and can eat more fish.

A Healthy Guide to Eating Fish from Lakes and Reservoirs without Site-Specific Advice

Women over 45 years and men can safely eat more fish



Rainbow trout 

 = High in Omega-3s



Bullhead



Catfish



Bluegill or other sunfish



Brown trout 16 inches or less 



Bass



Carp



Brown trout over 16 inches 

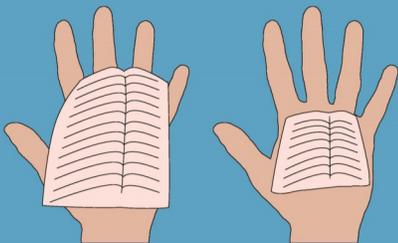
6 servings a week



2 servings a week



1 serving a week



For Adults For Children

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