

# Fish Advisory Fact Sheet



**OEHA**  
Office of Environmental Health  
Hazard Assessment



**CalEPA**  
California Environmental  
Protection Agency

## What are Fish Advisories?

Fish Advisories are guidelines that recommend how often you can safely eat fish caught from water bodies in California.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHA) offers over 100 site-specific advisories for lakes, rivers, bays, reservoirs, and the coast. For water bodies without site-specific advice, look for the appropriate statewide advisory at: [oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories](http://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories).

OEHA provides two sets of guidelines for eating fish, one for each of the following populations:

- Women 18 - 49 years and children 1 - 17 years
- Women 50 years and older and men 18 years and older

## Benefits of Eating Fish

Fish are a primary dietary source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, which can:

- Lower the risk of heart disease
- Lower triglyceride levels
- Slow the growth of plaque in your arteries
- Slightly lower blood pressure

Omega-3 fatty acids may also provide health benefits to developing babies. Pregnant and breastfeeding women can pass this nutrient to their babies by eating the right kind of fish.

## Risks of Eating Fish

Fish can take in harmful chemicals from the water and the food they eat. Chemicals like mercury and PCBs can build up in their bodies over time. Risks include exposure to:

- Mercury, which can harm the brain and nervous system and is especially harmful to fetuses, infants, and children
- PCBs, which can cause cancer and other harmful health effects

## How to Reduce your Risk

- Visit [oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories](http://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories) to check if there are advisories for water bodies where you fish.
- Follow our advisories by picking species that are lower in mercury and other harmful chemicals.
- Follow our general tips for catching and preparing fish:
  - ✓ Fish in a variety of locations
  - ✓ Eat different types of fish
  - ✓ Avoid fish that eat other fish
  - ✓ Eat smaller fish
  - ✓ Eat only the skinless fillet of fish
  - ✓ Eat only the meat of crabs and lobsters

