



INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM BIG BEAR LAKE (SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY)

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency
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Why did OEHHA develop advisories for eating fish from Big Bear Lake?

OEHHA developed an advisory for Big Bear Lake because of mercury and PCBs found in fish caught from this water body. Big Bear Lake is located in San Bernardino County, approximately 25 miles northeast of the city of San Bernardino. This advisory is part of an ongoing effort by OEHHA to provide safe-eating advice for fish in different California water bodies.

Why should I eat fish?

- Low-contaminant fish are an important part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week.
- Fish are a good source of protein, vitamins, and are a primary dietary source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Eating low-contaminant fish while pregnant may help the baby's brain develop.

Which chemicals are of concern for people eating fish from Big Bear Lake?

- Mercury
 - Mercury is a metal that comes from natural sources, mining, and air fallout from burning coal and other fuels. It is the most commonly found contaminant in fish.
 - Too much methylmercury, the form of mercury found in fish, can harm the brain, especially in fetuses, babies, and children. Mothers can pass methylmercury to their babies during pregnancy.
 - Because fetuses, babies, and children are especially sensitive to mercury, OEHHA has one set of advice for the amount of mercury-containing fish that women age 18-45 years and children should eat, and another set of advice for women 46 years and older and men 18 years and older.
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
 - PCBs are industrial chemicals. While banned in the 1970s, they persist for many years in the environment and are still found in the air and water from spills, leaks, and improper disposal.
 - High levels of PCBs can cause health problems. Some forms of PCBs caused cancer in animal studies.

- PCBs can build up to very high levels in the skin, fat, and some internal organs of fish. That is why OEHHA recommends eating only skinless fillet (meat) of fish.

How did OEHHA determine the consumption guidelines for fish from Big Bear Lake?

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from Big Bear Lake to levels that are considered safe for human consumption.
- OEHHA's consumption guidelines balance the risks and benefits of fish consumption.

What does OEHHA recommend for people who want to eat fish from Big Bear Lake?

- OEHHA recommends the amount and type of fish that can be eaten each week as "servings." A serving is about the size and thickness of your hand for fish fillets. Give children smaller servings.
- Women 18-45 years and children 1-17 years can eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of black bass species or Common Carp, or
 - 5 total servings per week of crappie or Rainbow Trout
- Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older can eat:
 - 2 total servings per week of black bass species or Common Carp, or
 - 5 total servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or
 - 7 total servings per week of crappie

What else can I do to protect my health and the health of my family?

- Eat a variety of fish.
- Eat smaller (younger) fish of legal size.
- Eat only the skinless fillet or meat portion of fish.
- Thoroughly cook the fish, allow the juice to drain away.
- Learn about OEHHA's guidelines for eating sport fish in California:
 - Visit <https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>, or call OEHHA at (916) 324-7572 or (510) 622-3170
 - Check the Freshwater or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or visit <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regulations>



Women
(18-45 Years)

Children
(1-17 Years)

5 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

5 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL
SERVING
A WEEK

Serving Size

A serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

For Adults



For Children



Women
(46+ Years)

Men
(18+ Years)

7 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

5 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

A GUIDE TO EATING FISH from BIG BEAR LAKE

(SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY)

Eat the Good Fish

Eating fish that are low in chemicals may provide health benefits to children and adults.



Avoid the Bad Fish

Eating fish with higher levels of chemicals like mercury or PCBs may cause health problems in children and adults.



Choose the Right Fish

Chemicals may be more harmful to unborn babies and children.



Crappie



Rainbow Trout

♥ high in omega-3s



Common Carp



Black Bass Species

♥ high in omega-3s



California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

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Eat only the skinless fillet



Eat only the meat



Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.