



INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM CACHE CREEK

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency
July 2014

Why did OEHHA update the advisory for eating fish from Cache Creek?

OEHHA previously issued guidelines for eating fish from Clear Lake and Cache Creek based on findings of mercury in fish and shellfish. The guidelines were combined for both water bodies in one advisory. In May 2014, OEHHA updated the Clear Lake advisory, providing advice for Clear Lake only. Then OEHHA re-evaluated mercury levels in fish from Cache Creek and updated that advisory as well. The updated Cache Creek guidelines are specific to fish from that water body. Also, OEHHA included newer data in the updated advisories.

Why should I eat fish?

Fish, in general, are:

- An important part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week.
- A good source of protein, vitamins, and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. It is important for pregnant women to eat fish because omega-3 fatty acids help the baby's brain develop.

How does mercury get into fish and shellfish?

- Mercury is a metal that comes from natural sources, mining, and air fallout from burning coal and other fuels.
 - The Cache Creek watershed, located in the northern California Coast Range, is naturally rich in mercury and other ores.
 - The watershed contains three historic mining districts, and many mercury mines operated there from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.
- When mercury gets into the water, it settles to the bottom where bacteria in the mud or sand change it to the organic form "methylmercury."
- Methylmercury, a more toxic form of mercury, gets into fish and shellfish through the food they eat. It is passed up the food chain from small plants and animals to larger, older fish, where it builds up.

What are the health concerns for people eating fish with mercury?

- Mercury—in the form methylmercury—can harm the brain and nervous system of people, especially unborn babies and children.
 - Women over 45 years and men have lower risk and can eat more fish.

How do mercury levels in fish and shellfish from Cache Creek compare to other water bodies in California?

- The mercury levels in the fish from Cache Creek are similar to those in Clear Lake and many other water bodies in northern California.
- As is often the case, top predators such as largemouth bass and pikeminnow have the highest mercury levels and the most restrictive consumption advice.
- Other types of fish have low or moderate mercury levels and can be eaten at least once a week (see the Guides below).

How did OEHHA determine the guidelines for fish from Cache Creek?

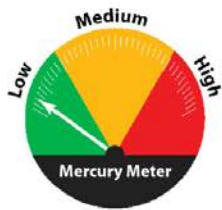
- OEHHA compared mercury levels in fish from Cache Creek to acceptable levels of human exposure.
- OEHHA's guidelines balance the risks and benefits of eating fish and shellfish.

What else can I do to protect my health and my family's?

- Eat a variety of fish, especially those low in chemicals and high in omega-3s.
- Eat smaller (younger) fish of legal size.
- Eat only the skinless fillet or meat portion of fish and shellfish you catch.
- Thoroughly cook the fish and allow the juices to drain away.
- Learn about OEHHA's guidelines for eating fish from other water bodies in California:
 - Visit www.oehha.ca.gov (click on "FISH", then "Fish Advisories"), or call OEHHA at 916-323-7319 or 510-622-3170.
 - Check the Freshwater or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or visit www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations

A Healthy Guide to Eating Fish from Cache Creek

Women 18-45 years and children 1-17 years



Mosquitofish



Bluegill or green sunfish



Carp



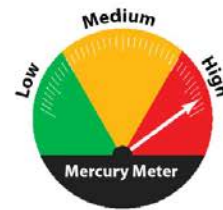
Catfish



Hardhead



Sucker



Crappie



Largemouth or smallmouth bass



Pikeminnow

2 servings a week

OR

1 serving a week

Do not eat

What is a serving?



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.

A Healthy Guide to Eating Fish from Cache Creek

Women over 45 years and men



7 servings a week

OR

2 servings a week

OR

1 serving a week

What is a serving?



For Adults For Children

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

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