

**THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT (“OEHHA”)  
INFORMATION ABOUT SAFE EATING GUIDELINES FOR DONNER LAKE**

**What are “Safe Eating Guidelines”?**

OEHHA uses findings of chemical levels in fish to provide Safe Eating Guidelines for fish caught in lakes and streams. This helps people choose fish that are safe to eat and are high in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board tested fish from Donner Lake for chemicals. Results:

- None of the fish had high chemical levels.
- Brown trout and lake trout had medium levels of mercury and PCBs.
- Rainbow trout and kokanee had low levels of the chemicals tested.

**How do chemicals like mercury and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) get in fish?**

Chemicals enter lakes and streams from spills, the air, or water runoff from land.

- Mercury comes from natural sources, mining, and air fallout from burning coal and other fuels.
  - PCBs come from spills, leaks, and improper disposal of materials containing PCBs.
- Chemicals enter fish through the food they eat in lakes and streams.

**What are the health concerns about eating fish with mercury and PCBs?**

- Too much methylmercury, a form of mercury, can change how the brains of babies and children develop. Mothers can pass this methylmercury to their babies during pregnancy.
- High levels of PCBs can cause health problems in young children and adults. Some forms of PCBs cause cancer in animal studies.

**Should I continue to eat fish from Donner Lake?**

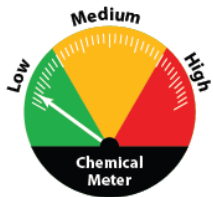
**Yes!** Kokanee and rainbow trout from Donner Lake are good for the body.  
Fish, in general, is:

- 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. Pregnant women should eat fish because omega-3 fatty acids help the baby's brain develop.

**What should I do to protect my health and my family's health?**

- Follow the advice in “A guide to eating fish caught in Donner Lake.”
- 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 fillet portion of fish you catch.
- Thoroughly cook the fish, allow the juice to drain away.
- Read about Safe Eating Guidelines for other water bodies in California:
  - Fresh Water or Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklets from the California Department of Fish and Game, or [www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations)
  - Visit [www.oehha.ca.gov](http://www.oehha.ca.gov) (click on “FISH”, then “Safe Eating Guidelines”)

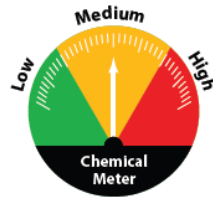
# A guide to eating fish caught in Donner Lake, Nevada County



Kokanee ♥



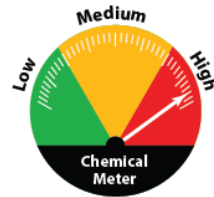
Rainbow trout ♥



Brown trout ♥



Lake trout ♥



♥ = High in Omega-3s

Kokanee photo: Travis Shinabarger  
Brown and Lake trout photos: Michigan Sea Grant

## What is a serving?



For Adults For Children

The recommended serving of fish is about 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 PCBs and mercury. PCBs might cause cancer. Mercury can negatively affect how the brain develops in unborn babies and children. It is especially important for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to follow these guidelines.

Some chemicals are in the fat and skin of the fish. Throw these parts away and eat only the fillet.

### Safe to eat

Kokanee – 2 servings per week

OR

Rainbow trout

– 4 servings per week for women 18 - 45 and children 1 - 17

– 7 servings per week for men over 18 and women over 45

OR

### Safe to eat

1 serving per week

There are no fish with high levels of chemicals