



INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM LEGG LAKE (LOS ANGELES COUNTY)

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency
April 2018

Why did OEHHA develop an advisory for eating fish from Legg Lake?

OEHHA developed an advisory for Legg Lake because of mercury and PCBs found in the fish caught from two of the three water bodies that make up the Legg Lake complex: North Lake, Center Lake, and Legg Lake. Advice was extended to the third water body (North Lake) because of the connectivity of the three water bodies that allows fish to move between them unrestricted. These lakes are located in Los Angeles County in the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. It is located in the city of South El Monte, CA, approximately 14 miles east of Los Angeles. 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 Legg 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 Legg Lake?

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from Legg 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 Legg Lake?

- OEHHA recommends the amounts and types of fish that may 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
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of black bass species or Common Carp, or
 - 5 total servings per week of Channel Catfish, or
 - 7 total servings per week of sunfish species
- Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of Common Carp, or
 - 3 total servings per week of black bass species, or
 - 5 total servings per week of Channel Catfish, or
 - 7 total servings per week of sunfish species
- For additional fish species found in Legg Lake and not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish from California's lakes and reservoirs without site-specific advice](#)

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 www.oehha.ca.gov (click on "FISH", then "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)

7 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

5 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL
SERVING
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

3 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL
SERVING
A WEEK

A GUIDE TO EATING FISH *from* LEGG LAKE

INCLUDES NORTH LAKE,
CENTER LAKE, AND LEGG LAKE
(LOS ANGELES 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.



Sunfish Species



Channel Catfish



Black Bass Species
♥ high in omega-3s



Carp



California Office of Environmental
Health Hazard Assessment

web www.oehha.ca.gov/fish
email fish@oehha.ca.gov
phone (916) 324-7572

Eat only the
skinless fillet



Eat only the meat



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