



INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM CASTAIC LAKE AND CASTAIC LAGOON (LOS ANGELES COUNTY)

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
California Environmental Protection Agency
February 2023

Why did OEHHA update the advisory for eating fish from Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon?

OEHHA updated the advisory for Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon because additional information on mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels in fish tissue has become available. This advisory supersedes the previous advisory for eating fish from Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon (also known as Upper Lake and Lower Lake, respectively). These water bodies are located approximately ten miles north of Santa Clarita, in Los Angeles County. This advisory is part of an ongoing effort by OEHHA to provide safe-eating advice for fish from 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 and vitamins, and are a primary dietary source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Eating low-contaminant fish while pregnant may be beneficial to the baby's brain development.

Which contaminants are of concern for people eating these fish from Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon?

- Mercury
 - Mercury is a metal that comes from mining, air fallout from burning coal and other fuels, and from natural sources. It is the most commonly found contaminant of concern 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 18–49 years and children should eat, and another set of advice for women 50 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 fish, sediment, and water as a result of spills, leaks, and improper disposal.
 - PCBs can increase cancer risk. PCBs may also harm the developing fetus, which can include effects on growth and learning. Women can pass PCBs on to their babies during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
 - 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 the skinless fillet (meat) of fish.

How did OEHHA determine the consumption guidelines for eating these fish species from Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon?

- OEHHA compared contaminant levels in fish caught from Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon to levels that are considered safe for human consumption.
- OEHHA’s consumption guidelines balance the health benefits of fish consumption and the risks from the contaminants.

What does OEHHA recommend for people who want to eat these fish species from Castaic Lake?

- OEHHA recommends the types and amounts 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. For smaller fish species, several individual fish may be required to yield a serving.
- Women 18–49 years and children 1–17 years
 - Should not eat black bass species or Channel Catfish
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of Common Carp or Striped Bass, or
 - 2 total servings per week of Threadfin Shad, or
 - 3 total servings per week of sunfish species, or
 - 7 total servings per week of silverside species
- Women 50 years and older and men 18 years and older
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of black bass species or Channel Catfish, or
 - 3 total servings per week of sunfish species, or
 - 4 total servings per week of Common Carp or Striped Bass, or
 - 7 total servings per week of silverside species or Threadfin Shad

What does OEHHA recommend for people who want to eat these fish species from Castaic Lagoon?

- OEHHA recommends the types and amounts 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. For smaller fish species, several individual fish may be required to yield a serving.

- Women 18–49 years and children 1–17 years
 - May eat:
 - 1 total serving per week of black bass species, or
 - 2 total servings per week of Common Carp, or
 - 7 total servings per week of sculpin, silverside species, sunfish species, or Threadfin Shad
- Women 50 years and older and men 18 years and older
 - May eat:
 - 2 total servings per week of black bass species or Common Carp, or
 - 7 total servings per week of sculpin, silverside species, sunfish species, or Threadfin Shad
- For additional fish species found in Castaic Lake and Castaic Lagoon 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](#).

How long is the advisory in effect?

This advisory is effective starting February 2023 and does not expire. Chemical contaminant levels in fish do not change much over time; the advisory remains in effect until an update is issued.

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 and 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
(18-49 Years)
Children
(1-17 Years)

7 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

3 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING
A WEEK

0 DO NOT EAT

Serving Size

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

For Adults



For Children



Women
(50+ Years)
Men
(18+ Years)

7 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

3 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

7 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

4 TOTAL SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING
A WEEK

A GUIDE TO EATING FISH

from

CASTAIC 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.



Silverside Species



Sunfish Species



Threadfin Shad



Common Carp



Striped Bass
♥ high in omega-3s



Black Bass Species



Channel Catfish



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



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

Eat only the meat



Updated 02/2023



Women
(18-49 Years)

Children
(1-17 Years)

7 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL
SERVING
A WEEK



Women
(50+ Years)

Men
(18+ Years)

7 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL
SERVINGS
A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL
SERVINGS
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



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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.



Sculpin



Silverside Species



Sunfish Species



Threadfin Shad



Common Carp



Black Bass Species

♥ high in omega-3s



California Office of Environmental
Health Hazard Assessment

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

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