



## **INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM THE LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA (SONOMA COUNTY)**

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
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### **Why did OEHHA develop an advisory for eating fish from the Laguna de Santa Rosa?**

OEHHA developed an advisory for the Laguna de Santa Rosa because of mercury and PCBs found in the fish caught from this water body. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is located west of the city of Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County, and extends from Cotati to Forestville, where it joins with the Russian River. 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 the Laguna de Santa Rosa?**

- 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 the Laguna de Santa Rosa?**

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from the Laguna de Santa Rosa 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 the Laguna de Santa Rosa?**

OEHHA recommends the amounts and types of fish that may be eaten each week as "servings." A serving is considered to be 8 ounces, prior to cooking, or about the size and thickness of your hand for fish fillets. Give children smaller servings. For small fish species, several individual fish may make up a single serving.

- Women 18-45 years and children 1-17 years
  - Should not eat black bass species
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of sunfish species, or
    - 2 total servings per week of Common Carp or Sacramento Blackfish, or
    - 3 total servings per week of Fathead Minnow
- Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of black bass species, or
    - 2 total servings per week of sunfish species, or
    - 3 total servings per week of Common Carp, or
    - 5 total servings per week of Sacramento Blackfish, or
    - 7 total servings per week of Fathead Minnow
- For additional fish species found in the Laguna de Santa Rosa 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 low contaminant 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](http://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)



**Women**  
(46+ Years)

**Men**  
(18+ Years)

**3** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**2** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**2** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**1** TOTAL  
SERVING  
A WEEK

**0** DO NOT  
EAT

**7** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**5** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**3** TOTAL  
SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**2** 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

# A GUIDE TO EATING FISH

*from*

## LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA

(SONOMA 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.



Fathead Minnow



Blackfish



Carp



Sunfish Species



Black Bass Species



California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

web [www.oehha.ca.gov/fish](http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish)  
email [fish@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:fish@oehha.ca.gov)  
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Eat only the skinless fillet



Eat only the meat



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