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SCIENCE FOR A HEALTHY CALIFORNIA

Press Release

California Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
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Fish Advisory for Lake Evans in Riverside Offers Recommendations for Four Species

SACRAMENTO – Carp, black bass and sunfish from Lake Evans in Riverside can be safely eaten at least four times per week, according to a new state advisory issued today, but a do-not-consume recommendation for the lake's Channel Catfish remains in effect.

Lake Evans is a small man-made lake in Fairmount Park in the City of Riverside. The California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed the recommendations based on the levels of mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) measured in fish collected from Lake Evans.

Three of the four species evaluated from Lake Evans had very low levels of contaminants. Channel Catfish was the only species from the lake that was found to have high levels of contaminants, in this case PCBs.

"Eating fish low in chemical contaminants, such as carp and black bass and sunfish species from Lake Evans, can help reduce the risk of heart disease and provide an excellent source of protein," said Dr. Lauren Zeise, director of OEHHA. "These guidelines are designed to balance the health benefits of eating fish against the risks from exposure to chemicals in fish caught from Lake Evans."

When consuming fish from Lake Evans, men, women and children may safely eat seven servings per week of carp, or four servings per week of black bass species or sunfish species. No one should eat any Channel Catfish from the lake.

One serving is eight ounces prior to cooking, which for fish fillets is roughly the size and thickness of your hand. Children should eat smaller servings. To avoid contaminants that can build up in the skin, fat, and some internal organs, eat only the skinless fillet (meat) of fish.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal. It accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury, which can damage the brain and nervous system, especially in developing children and fetuses.

PCBs are industrial chemicals that were used in electrical equipment. PCB manufacturing in the United States stopped in the late 1970s, but PCBs can still be found in the environment from spills, leaks or improper disposal. They can affect the nervous system and cause cancer and other negative health effects.

Eating fish in amounts slightly greater than the advisory's recommendations is not likely to cause health problems if it is done occasionally, such as eating fish caught during an annual vacation.

The health advisory and eating advice for Lake Evans – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <https://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>. Pictorial versions of the fish consumption advice are also available on that page in both English and Spanish.

The Lake Evans recommendations join more than 80 other OEHHA advisories that provide site-specific, health-based fish consumption advice for many of the places where people catch and eat fish in California, including lakes, rivers, bays, reservoirs, and the California coast. OEHHA also has statewide fish advisories for coastal locations without site-specific advice; lakes and reservoirs without site-specific advice; and fish that migrate up rivers from the sea to spawn.

OEHHA is the primary state entity for the assessment of risks posed by chemical contaminants in the environment. Its mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment by scientific evaluation of risks posed by hazardous substances.

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