



## **INFORMATION ABOUT EATING FISH FROM SAN DIEGO BAY (SAN DIEGO COUNTY)**

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

### **Why did OEHHA develop an updated advisory for eating fish from San Diego Bay?**

OEHHA updated the advisory for San Diego Bay in San Diego County, because additional mercury and PCB data became available. This advisory supersedes the previous advisory for eating fish from San Diego Bay and 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 San Diego Bay?**

- 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 San Diego Bay?

- OEHHA compared chemical levels in fish caught from San Diego Bay 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 San Diego Bay?

- 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 smaller fish species, several individual fish may be required to yield a serving.
- Women 18-45 years and children 1-17 years
  - Should not eat Barred Sand Bass, Pacific Chub Mackerel, sharks, Shiner Perch, Spotted Sand Bass, Topsmelt, or Yellowfin Croaker.
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of Black Perch, Round Stingray, Shovelnose Guitarfish, or Spiny Lobster, or
    - 2 total servings per week of Diamond Turbot, Pile Perch, Rainbow Surfperch, or Spotted Turbot
- Women 46 years and older and men age 18 years and older
  - Should not eat Shiner Perch or Topsmelt
  - May eat:
    - 1 total serving per week of Barred Sand Bass, Pacific Chub Mackerel, sharks, Spotted Sand Bass, or Yellowfin Croaker, or
    - 2 total servings per week of Black Perch, Diamond Turbot, Round Stingray, Shovelnose Guitarfish, Spiny Lobster, or Spotted Turbot, or
    - 7 total servings per week of Pile Perch or Rainbow Surfperch
- For additional fish species found in San Diego and not included in this advisory, OEHHA recommends following the [statewide advisory for eating fish from the California coastal locations 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](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)

**2** TOTAL SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**2** TOTAL SERVINGS  
A WEEK

OR

**1** TOTAL SERVING  
A WEEK

**0** DO NOT EAT

**0** DO NOT EAT

**7** 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

**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 *San Diego Bay*

## SAN DIEGO BAY

(SAN DIEGO 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.



Pile Perch



Rainbow Surfperch



Diamond Turbot



Spotted Turbot



Black Perch



Round Stingray



Shovelnose Guitarfish



(California) Spiny Lobster



Sharks



Barred Sand Bass



Spotted Sand Bass



Pacific Chub Mackerel



Yellowfin Croaker



Shiner Perch



Topsmelt



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)

phone (916) 324-7572

Eat only the skinless fillet



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

Eat only the meat



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