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## Press Release

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Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment  
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## **Fish Advisory for Shasta County's Shasta Lake Offers Safe Eating Advice for Black Bass Species, Rainbow Trout, Chinook (King) Salmon, and Other Fish Species**

SACRAMENTO – A new state fish advisory issued today offers safe eating advice for six species of fish from [Shasta Lake](#), located approximately 12 miles north of Redding in Shasta County.

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 Shasta Lake.

"Eating fish low in chemical contaminants 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 Shasta Lake."

When consuming fish from Shasta Lake, women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 may safely eat three servings per week of sunfish species, or two servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or one serving per week of black bass species, carp, or Chinook (King) Salmon. Women ages 18-45 and children ages 1-17 should not eat any Channel Catfish from the lake.

Women 46 years and older and men age 18 and older may safely eat seven servings per week of sunfish species, or six servings per week of Rainbow Trout, or three servings per week of carp, or two servings per week of black bass species or Chinook (King) Salmon, or one serving per week of Channel Catfish.

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

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is released into the environment from mining and burning coal, and accumulates in fish in the form of methylmercury. Methylmercury 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 Shasta Lake – as well as eating guidelines for other fish species and California bodies of water – are available at <http://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 Shasta Lake 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 breed.

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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