

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

ARD-EHP-25

2020

New Hampshire Fish Consumption Guidelines

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy diet. They are a good source of low fat protein and contain nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, a key nutrient for brain development. NHDES offers these fish consumption guidelines to educate the public regarding certain contaminants that have been analyzed in fish tissues. There are other contaminants that may be present in the environment that have not been analyzed, nor are they included in this advisory. Mercury analysis has been completed for a variety of the most common freshwater fish species, however not all species or waterbodies have been analyzed for mercury and the other contaminants listed in the advisory (fish sampled to date include 26 species, >230 waterbodies, ~4,000 fish). Mercury does not break down in the environment. Nearly all fish and shellfish have traces of mercury, and fish from some freshwater sources may also contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) or dioxin. Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain starting to form or grow. That is why babies and young children are at most risk. PCBs and dioxins are man-made organic chemicals which do not readily break down in the environment. They are taken up and may accumulate in fish. PCBs and dioxins have been shown to cause a variety of harmful health effects such as cancer as well as non-cancer health effects involving immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. Risks from mercury, PCBs and dioxin in fish and shellfish depend on the amount of fish and shellfish eaten and the levels of these contaminants in the fish and shellfish. You can eat fish and be healthy. Following these guidelines will help.

FRESHWATER FISH

The **high risk group** consists of pregnant and nursing women and women who may become pregnant (i.e. women of child bearing age) and children through age 6. The **low risk group** consists of all other adults and children age 7 and older. A meal size is 4 oz. for children age 6 and under. For older children and adults (including women in the high risk group) a meal size is 8 oz. Follow these fish consumption guidelines, they outline how much these groups can safely eat:

STATEWIDE FRESHWATER FISH ADVICE DUE TO MERCURY			
Waterbody Name	Fish Species	High Risk Group	Low Risk Group
All fresh lakes, ponds, rivers and streams ¹	Rainbow and Brown trout	1 meal per week	6 meals per week
	All other freshwater fish including Brook trout	1 meal per month	4 meals per month
	Largemouth and Smallmouth bass, Pickerel, White perch and Yellow perch	Limit consumption to fish 12 inches or less in length while following the above guidelines	

¹ NHDES. *Status and trends of mercury in fish tissue in New Hampshire waterbodies, 1992-2016*. Final Report, Concord, November 2017. [publication #R-WD-17-22]

SPECIAL ADVICE FOR OTHER NH FRESH WATERBODIES				
Waterbody Name	Fish Species	High Risk Group	Low Risk Group	Contaminant
Androscoggin River from Berlin to the Maine border ²	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	Do not eat	Dioxin and Mercury
Ashuelot Pond (Washington)	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Comerford and Moore Reservoirs on the Connecticut River ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Country Pond (Kingston/Newton) ³	Large and Smallmouth bass	1 meal per month and 6 meals per year	6 meals per year	PCBs and Mercury
	All other fish species	1 meal per month	21 meals per year	PCBs and Mercury
Crescent Lake (Newport) ⁴	Yellow perch	1 meal per month	7 meals per month	Mercury
Crystal Lake (Gilmanton) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Dubes Pond (Hooksett) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Eastman Pond (Grantham) ⁴	Yellow perch	2 meal per month	11 meals per month	Mercury
	Smallmouth bass	1 meal per month	5 meals per month	Mercury
Jackman Reservoir (Hillsboro) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Mascoma Lake (Enfield) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
May Pond (Washington) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury
Perkins Pond (Sunapee) ⁴	Largemouth bass	1 meal per month	3 meals per month	Mercury
	Yellow perch	1 meal per month	8 meals per month	Mercury
	Smallmouth bass	1 meal per month	5 meals per month	Mercury
Rand Pond (Goshen) ⁴	Yellow perch	2 meals per month	12 meals per month	Mercury
	Brown bullhead	2 meals per month	13 meals per month	Mercury
Souhegan River between Riverway East and the Goldman Dam ⁵	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	Do not eat	PCBs
Squam Lake and Little Squam Lake	Yellow perch	4 meals per year	1 meal per month	PCBs
	All other freshwater fish	1 meal per year	3 meals per year	PCBs

² Chlor-Alkali former superfund site, Berlin, NH – <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/01/550299.pdf>

³ NHDES Interoffice Memo. Ottati & Goss/Great Lakes Container Corp. Site, Kingston, NH - Evaluation of PCB Contamination in Fish Sampled from Country Pond. December 30, 2011.

⁴ NHDES. "Evaluation of Mercury Concentration in Fish Collected from Claremont Area Water Bodies." Health Consultation, Concord, 2009.

⁵ Fletcher's Paint Works & Storage superfund site, Milford, NH – <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Healthenv&id=0101085>

SPECIAL ADVICE FOR OTHER NH FRESH WATERBODIES				
Waterbody Name	Fish Species	High Risk Group	Low Risk Group	Contaminant
Stocker Pond (Grantham) ⁴	Rock Bass	2 meals per month	10 meals per month	Mercury
Tower Hill Pond (Candia) ¹	All freshwater fish	Do not eat	2 meals per month	Mercury

SALTWATER FISH, SHELLFISH AND COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE FISH

For all saltwater fish, shellfish and commercially available fish please follow these consumption guidelines:

Fish Species	High Risk Group	Low Risk Group
BEST CHOICES Catfish, Cod, Flounder, Haddock, Herring, Light Tuna (canned), Pollack, Sole, Salmon, Tilapia and Shellfish (Oysters, Shrimp, Crab, Clams, Scallops, Lobster)	2 meals per week	No limit
GOOD CHOICES Halibut, Red Snapper, Tuna Steak, and White Tuna (canned)	1 meal per week	No limit
CAUTION King Mackerel, Swordfish, Shark, Tilefish	Do not eat	2 meals per month
AVOID CONSUMPTION Lobster tomalley (green substance in lobster)	Do not eat	Do not eat

Consumption restrictions for both salt water and freshwater fish should be considered together and cumulatively. For example, a pregnant woman may have one meal of freshwater fish, but is advised not to consume any additional mercury containing freshwater or saltwater fish that month.

Remember: "meal" sizes are 4 oz. for children age 6 and under and 8 oz. for older children and adults.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find more information regarding the details on waterbody-specific advisories, please call the NHDES Rivers and Lakes coordinator at (603) 271-2959.

The technical background for the 2018 update to the New Hampshire Statewide Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory, is based on: NHDES. "Status and trends of mercury in fish tissue in New Hampshire waterbodies, 1992 - 2016." Final Report, Concord, November 2017. [publication #R-WD-17-22]

For general questions about fishing regulations in New Hampshire, please call the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department at (603) 271-3421, or visit the [NH Fish and Game website](#).