

Fish Consumption Advisory Information

2016 District of Columbia Fish Consumption Advisory

DO NOT EAT:

Do not eat eel, carp, or striped bass (rockfish, striper) caught in District waters because they are the most contaminated by chemicals like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

American eel



Carp



Striped bass (rockfish, striper)



RECOMMENDED CONSUMPTION LIMITS

If you do eat fish caught in District waterways, please use the recommended limits below:

FISH SPECIES	RECOMMENDED CONSUMPTION LIMIT - One serving = eight (8) ounces uncooked fish*
Sunfish	No more than four servings per month for adults
Blue catfish	No more than three servings per month for adults
Northern snakehead	No more than three servings per month for adults
White perch	No more than three servings per month for adults
Largemouth bass	No more than two servings per month for adults
Brown bullhead	No more than one serving per month for adults
Channel catfish	No more than one serving per month for adults

*If species are mixed, once the lowest limit is met, eat no more DC caught fish for the month. Limit consumption of all other fish not listed.

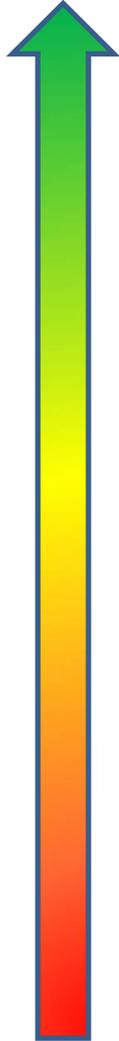
Background

The DOEE has been monitoring chemical contaminants in fish since 1980, in cooperation with the US EPA. The 2016 Fish Advisory is based on contaminant concentrations found in a report called “*Analysis of Contaminant Concentrations in Fish Tissue Collected from the Waters of the District of Columbia*”. The report was completed in 2014, by U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Field Office for the District Department of the Environment, Water Quality Division. The current fish advisory was issued in 1994 and states the consumption limits for fish caught in District of Columbia waterbodies. The 2016 fish advisory increases the kinds and amount of fish that a person can eat from District waters.

Chemical contaminants pollute the rivers via runoff from streets, highways, sidewalks, stormwater, snow melt and other sources and accumulate in sediments and the water column. Fish absorb chemical contaminants from their food and from water as it passes over their gills. Bottom feeding fish, such as catfish, carp and eel feed on worms and other organisms living in the sediment and have higher contamination levels than other fish. Predator fish, such as largemouth bass, accumulate more contaminants over time by eating smaller contaminated fish.

**2016 Fish Consumption Advisory
For
Waters of the District of Columbia**

Most Safe



Least Safe

Fish	Children <6 years 3oz portion	Women <50 years 6oz portion	General Population 8oz portion
 Sunfishes	Up to 2 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month	Up to 4 meals/month
 Blue Catfish	Up to 2 meals/month	Up to 3 meals/month	Up to 3 meals/month
 Northern Snakehead	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 3 meals/month	Up to 3 meals/month
 White Perch	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 3 meals/month	Up to 3 meals/month
 Largemouth Bass	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 2 meals/month	Up to 2 meals/month
 Brown Bullhead	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
 Channel Catfish	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month	Up to 1 meal/month
 Carp	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat
 Eel	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat
 Striped Bass	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat	Do Not Eat

*If species are mixed, once the lowest limit is met, eat no more DC caught fish for the month. Limit consumption of all other fish not listed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a fish consumption advisory?

A: A fish consumption advisory is a public health alert that provides recommendations on safe fish consumption when contaminants are detected in fish tissues in District waters. The contaminant listed in fish consumption advisories in the District is polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs are the most common contaminant resulting in a fish consumption advisory in the District. The DOEE fish consumption advisory addresses recreational fishing only, and are recommendations for public health, not regulations or laws. These advisories are not for commercial fish sold in supermarkets, restaurants, farmers' markets, and the Maine Avenue Fish Market (The Wharf). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets and enforces the standards for contaminants in fish that are sold commercially.

By following the recommended advisories for eating fish, you can reduce your risk of adverse health effects from exposure to various contaminants and still enjoy the benefits of eating fish. The nutritional and cardiovascular or other health benefits of eating fish are well established, and these advisories can help people make better choices for safe consumption.

Q: What are PCBs?

A: PCBs or polychlorinated biphenyls are man-made organic compounds that can build-up and last for long periods (approximately 8 to 15 years from time of exposure) in fatty tissue and in the environment. They were most often used in electrical equipment in the 1950's – 1970's. PCBs are no longer produced, but are still present in the environment.

Q: Why should I be concerned about PCBs?

A: Long-term exposure to PCBs may increase the risk of cancer. Some studies in humans have also suggested that PCB exposure may cause adverse developmental effects in children and developing fetuses. Infants and children are particularly sensitive to the effects of PCBs since their nervous systems are still developing. PCBs also build up in women's bodies and are often passed on in the mother's milk. Therefore, DOEE is recommending that high risk individuals, such as pregnant women, woman planning to become pregnant, nursing mothers, infants, and young children should avoid eating PCB-contaminated fish from the advisory areas.

Q: What can be done to reduce the health risk from eating fish containing PCBs?

A: PCB levels can be reduced in fish by following these guidelines:

Choose to consume smaller fish of legal size. Smaller fish are generally have had less time to accumulate any contaminants that may be present in the water or sediments.

Remove and discard all internal organs.

When preparing the catch please remember to always skin the fish. Contaminants tend to accumulate in the fat between the skin and the muscle of the fish.

Once the fish is skinned, trim any remaining visible fat, including the belly flap.

Cook the fish so that any remaining fat drains away from the fish such as grilling or broiling on a porous pan.

Fat that has cooked away from the fish should not be reused for any purpose.

Q: Is it best not to eat fish caught in the District if I'm pregnant?

A: Women who are pregnant, nursing, or want to become pregnant should follow recommendations by the FDA and the advice of their doctor.

Q: How many servings per month can you have of any combination of fish species?

A: Eat no more than two meals per month of any fish caught in District waters. Choose small fish of legal size. Do not eat eel, carp, or striped bass (rockfish, striper) caught in District waters because they are the most contaminated by chemicals (PCBs).

Q: What groups are at higher risk for adverse effects from eating contaminated fish?

A: Those at greatest risk include anyone who eats more than two meals per month of fish caught in the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. In addition, women who are pregnant, nursing, or want to become pregnant and children below the age of 6 years may be at greater risk of incurring adverse effects than other members of the general population.

Q: Whom should I contact to get more information on fish consumption advisories or PCBs?

A: For further information regarding fish consumption advisories or the health effects of PCBs, please contact the Department of Energy and Environment 1200 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002 or call (202) 535-2600.