

Fish Preparation Guidelines

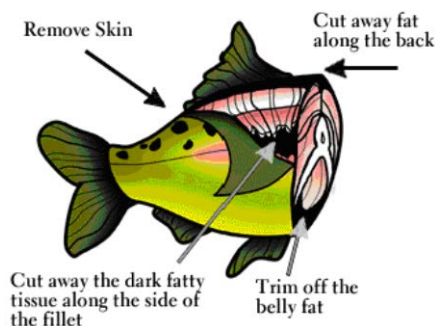
While fish can be part of a healthy, balanced diet, some fish caught in the waters of the District of Columbia may contain chemicals of concern such as PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). These contaminants exist in waterways in some cases due to past unregulated industrial practices and may cause serious health effects.

All of the District of Columbia waters are under an advisory that recommends not eating eel, carp and striped bass. Consumption of other fish caught in District waters should be on a limited basis. This advisory covers the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, within the boundaries of the District. This advisory is designed to protect against eating large amounts of fish from waters that have not been tested, or for certain fish species that have not been tested or fish that may contain other unidentified contaminants. One meal is considered to be one-half pound (8oz) of fish for a 154-pound person.

The advisories are only for fish caught in District waters and do not apply to fish raised for commercial purposes or those bought in stores, fish markets, or restaurants.

Consumers can reduce the potential risk of exposure to organic contaminants by properly cleaning, skinning, trimming, and cooking fish. Proper preparation generally includes trimming away fat and broiling or grilling the fish to allow remaining fat to drip away. Juices and fats that cook out of the fish should not be eaten or reused for cooking or preparing other foods.

Ways to reduce fat content and reduce chemical exposure are as follows:



ALWAYS SKIN FISH AND TRIM AWAY FAT by slicing off the belly flap of meat along the bottom of the fish, the fat along the top of the back, and the dark meat along the lateral line on each side of the fish (see diagram above).

ALWAYS COOK FISH SO FAT DRAINS AWAY, preferably by baking, broiling, or grilling the fish; if poaching or deep-fat frying, discard the broth or oil, avoid pan frying or making soups and chowders as these methods retain fat laden juices.

No amount of trimming will make species listed as **DO NOT EAT** safe to eat.