

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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ARD-EHP-25

2021

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 six. The **low risk group** consists of all other adults and children age seven and older. A meal size is 4 oz. for children age six 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 NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 |
| Beaver Lake (Derry) | Large & smallmouth bass | 1 meal per month | 3 meals per month | PFOS |
| Canobie Lake (Salem) | All freshwater fish | 1 meal per month | 3 meals per month | PFOS |
| Cobbetts Pond (Windham) | Large & smallmouth bass | 1 meal per month | 2 meals per month | PFOS |
| 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 |
| Horseshoe Pond (Merrimack) | All freshwater fish | Children younger than 7 years - Do not eat | 1 meal per month | PFOS |
| | | Women of childbearing age - 1 meal per month | | |
| 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 | Largemouth bass | 1 meal per month | 3 meals per month | Mercury |

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.

| SPECIAL ADVICE FOR OTHER NEW HAMPSHIRE FRESH WATERBODIES | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Waterbody Name | Fish Species | High Risk Group | Low Risk Group | Contaminant |
| (Sunapee) ⁴ | 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 |
| Robinson Pond (Hudson) | All freshwater fish | Children younger than 7 years - Do not eat | 2 meals per month | PFOS |
| | | Women of childbearing age - 1 meal per month | | |
| 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 |
| 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 six and under and 8 oz. for older children and adults.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

To find more information regarding the details on waterbody-specific advisories, please call the NHDES Rivers and Lakes coordinator at [\(603\) 271-2959](tel:6032712959).

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](tel:6032713421), or visit the [NH Fish and Game website](#).