
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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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. However, nearly all fish and shellfish have traces of mercury. Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain starting to form or grow. That is why babies and young children are at most risk. Risks from mercury in fish and shellfish depend on the amount of fish and shellfish eaten and the levels of mercury in the fish and shellfish. You can eat fish and be healthy. Following these guidelines will help.

Freshwater Fish

For all freshwater fish, except stocked trout, follow these fish consumption guidelines:

- Pregnant and nursing women, and women who may become pregnant **can safely eat ONE**, 8-ounce meal of freshwater fish per month.
- Children under age 7 **can safely eat ONE**, 4-ounce meal of freshwater fish per month.
- All other adults and children age 7 and older **can safely eat FOUR**, 8-ounce meals of freshwater fish per month.
- When eating bass, pickerel, white perch or yellow perch, limit consumption to fish 12 inches or less in length while following the above guidelines.

Stocked trout contains relatively low levels of mercury. For *rainbow* and *brown trout*, women of childbearing age and children can safely eat ONE meal per week; others can eat SIX meals per week. *Brook trout* could be either stocked or from a native population, and therefore should be consumed at the rate of the general freshwater advisory above.

Fish from several waterbodies in New Hampshire have been shown to have higher than average mercury concentrations. For the waterbodies identified below, *women of childbearing age and young children should not consume any fish*; others may consume TWO meals per month.

- Ashuelot Pond, Washington
- Comerford and Moore Reservoirs on the Connecticut River
- Crystal Lake, Gilmanton
- Dubes Pond, Hooksett
- Jackman Reservoir, Hillsboro

- Mascoma Lake, Enfield
- May Pond, Washington
- Tower Hill Pond, Candia

In addition, NO fish should be consumed from the Androscoggin River from Berlin to the Maine border due to potential dioxin contamination.

Saltwater Fish, Shellfish and Commercially Available Fish

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

BEST CHOICES: Catfish, Cod, Flounder, Haddock, Herring, Light Tuna (canned), Pollack, Sole, Salmon, Tilapia and Shellfish (Oysters, Shrimp, Crab, Clams, Scallops, Lobster)

- Pregnant and nursing women, women who may become pregnant, and young children **can safely eat** TWO meals per week. For all others, no limit as part of a balanced diet.

GOOD CHOICES: Halibut, Red Snapper, Tuna Steak, and White Tuna (canned)

- Pregnant and nursing women, women who may become pregnant, and young children **can safely eat** ONE meal per week. For all others, no limit as part of a balanced diet.

CAUTION: King Mackerel, Swordfish, Shark, Tilefish

- Pregnant and nursing women, women who may become pregnant, and young children **should avoid consumption.** For all others, TWO meals per month.

All dietary sources of fish should be considered together. 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.

For More Information

To find more information regarding the health effects of mercury or details on waterbody-specific advisories, please call the DES Environmental Health Program at (603) 271-1370.

To review the technical background for the 2008 Update to the New Hampshire Statewide Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory, please see <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/ard/documents/r-ard-08-1.pdf>

To learn more about the Volunteer Mercury in Fish Sampling Program, please visit <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-26.pdf>

For general questions about fishing regulations in New Hampshire, please call the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department at (603) 271-3211, or go to www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Fishing/fishing.htm.