

## How Can I Reduce My Risk?

**Harmful chemicals can build up in the fatty parts of fish. To lower the amount of these chemicals in the fish that you eat, do this:**

**Eat** only the fillet and use only the fillet for soups and chowders.

**Remove** and throw away the head, skin, guts, innards' and fatty parts such as the belly flap, before cooking.

**Bake, Broil, Steam or Grill Fish.** Let fatty juices drip away.

**Eat Less Fish Suspected of Having Mercury Contamination.** Mercury gets into all parts of the fish, including the fillet. Eating less of these fish is the only way to reduce your exposure.

## Remember These Things When Eating Fish:

**Eat smaller, younger fish.**

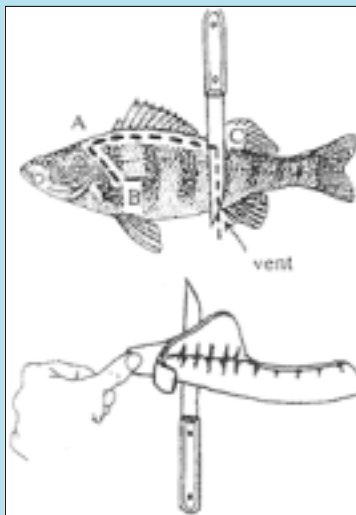
**Don't eat** fatty fish such as carp and catfish.

**Try to eat a variety of fish** and seafood caught in different places.

**Trim off the skin, belly fat and other fat** when preparing fish.

**Grill, bake or broil** on a rack so fat drains off.

**Do not reuse the oil** after you fry fish.



## What You Can Do

**Recycling.** Many things around the house have some mercury in them. Don't throw away thermometers, thermostats, batteries, and some paints in the trash. Call your Solid Waste District to learn safe ways to get rid of these.

**Save energy.** Most mercury around us comes from burning coal in power plants. Saving energy will reduce the mercury coming from those plants. Look for washers, dryers, televisions and other appliances that use less energy (look for the ENERGY STAR® label). Use compact fluorescent light bulbs, and turn off lights you are not using. You can save energy and lower your electric bill, too. (Dispose of compact fluorescent light bulbs properly as household hazardous waste. They contain a small amount of mercury.)

**Dental fillings.** Ask your dentist if new fillings you may need can be free of mercury.

**Cleaning up mercury.** What if you break a thermometer, or have any kind of mercury spill? Don't try to vacuum it up or sweep it up with a broom. Never pour it down a drain. Call your health department or fire department for help in the clean up.



**To dispose of anything with mercury or other household hazardous waste contact these Solid Waste Districts:**

**Cuyahoga County  
Solid Waste District**  
www.cuyahogawd.org  
(216) 443-3749

**Ashtabula County  
Solid Waste District:**  
(440) 576-3777

**Erie County  
Solid Waste District:**  
(419) 433-7303

**Lake County  
Solid Waste District:**  
(440) 350-2750

**Lorain County  
Solid Waste District:**  
(440) 329-5440

## For More Information and Resources



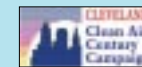
**Ohio Environmental Protection Agency**  
Check the **Ohio Fish Consumption Advisory** to find out about unsafe fish in your area. Call Ohio EPA at (216) 787-3000 and ask for the Public Interest Center, or click [www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/fishadvisory/](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/fishadvisory/) for brochures, fact sheets, on-line information, waterbody maps and links.

For information about **tuna consumption, fish sticks, fast food** and more click: [www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/) or [www.epa.gov/waterscience/fishadvice/advice.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fishadvice/advice.html).

To check mercury levels in **commercial fish** (that you buy) click: [www.cfsan.fda.gov/%7Efrf/sea-mehg.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/%7Efrf/sea-mehg.html).

**For brochures, fact sheets, posters and online information:**

**Earth Day Coalition**  
(216) 281-6468  
[www.earthdaycoalition.org](http://www.earthdaycoalition.org)



**Cleveland Clean Air  
Century Campaign**  
[www.ohiolung.org/ccacc.htm](http://www.ohiolung.org/ccacc.htm)



**Cuyahoga Heritage River**  
[www.cuyahogariverrap.org](http://www.cuyahogariverrap.org)



**Cleveland Department  
of Public Health**  
[www.clevelandhealth.org/](http://www.clevelandhealth.org/)



**Environmental Health  
Watch**  
[www.ehw.org](http://www.ehw.org)



**Cuyahoga County  
Board of Health**  
[www.ccbh.net](http://www.ccbh.net)



**Nature Center at Shaker  
Lakes**  
[www.shakerlakes.org](http://www.shakerlakes.org)



**Northeast Ohio Regional  
Sewer District**  
[www.neorsd.org/mercury](http://www.neorsd.org/mercury)

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# Fish Safe Eat Safe



## A Family Guide to Protecting Your Health

**Eating fish can put your health at risk.  
Get the benefits of eating fish and  
reduce the risks.**

**Learn to make good choices about:**

- safer places to catch fish
- safer types of fish to eat
- safer ways to prepare fish
- safer amounts of fish to eat

## Questions and Answers About Mercury and PCBs

### Mercury

**Most Fish Advisories in Ohio are based on unsafe levels of mercury and PCBs in certain fish**

Mercury is a metal that occurs in nature. Mercury enters the environment from coal burning power plants, improper disposal of mercury products and wastewater discharges. It is toxic in very small amounts. When mercury gets into Lake Erie, and lakes, streams and rivers, it can change to a much more toxic chemical. This then builds up in the tissue of fish and animals.

Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain that is just starting to grow and form. That's why young children, unborn and breast-fed babies are more at risk. Too much mercury may cause brain damage and lead to learning problems later in life. It takes larger amounts of mercury to harm older children and adults. When high levels of mercury build up, it may cause tremors, changes in eyesight and kidney damage.

### Warning! Warning! Warning!

Mercury and PCBs may pose **greater risk to babies and young children**. There is a special need for some to follow the guidelines given here to reduce these risks. They are:

**Women who are pregnant**

**Women who might become pregnant**

**Women breastfeeding a baby**

**Young children**

**Mercury and PCBs can pass from the mother's blood to her unborn baby and can affect the nervous system and brain before birth.**

After childbirth, these contaminants can reach your child through breast milk.

(The benefits of breastfeeding your baby may be greater than the risks. Consult your doctor.)

### PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls)

PCBs are man-made chemicals once used in many industrial and commercial products. They are still found in the environment even though they are not made anymore. Health problems caused by PCBs include skin conditions in adults and damage to the nervous and immune systems in children. PCBs are known to cause cancer in animals.

Babies who are exposed to PCBs before they are born may have a lower birth weight, reduced ability to learn, and may be slow to grow. PCBs in the body may also cause cancer.

### How Can I Tell If My Fish Has Mercury or PCBs?

**You can't! Fish that contain mercury and PCBs do not smell, look, or taste different from other fish.**

You can't get rid of mercury by cooking or cleaning. However, you can help remove PCBs by getting rid of fat and organs when you clean your fish.

### Should I Just Stop Eating Fish?

**NO!** Fish are a good part of a healthy diet. However, you or your family could be harmed if you eat certain types of fish or eat too many fish too often, from areas high in mercury and PCBs.

**There are many reasons to enjoy eating fish:**

Fish are a low-fat food source and are a great source of protein, vitamins and minerals.

The oils found in fish are important for the health of unborn and breast-fed babies.

Eating fish can help prevent heart disease in adults.

## What Kinds and How Much Fish Should I Eat?

The Ohio Department of Health advises that **all people limit eating of fish caught from all waters in Ohio to one meal per week** unless there is a more restrictive advisory. Check this chart and choose the right fish to reduce the risk to your health from eating fish.

### Fish LOWER in Mercury

**Women of Childbearing Age: Eat no more than 2 (two) 6 oz. meals per week. Children: Eat no more than 2 (two) 4 oz. meals per week**



Shellfish (shrimp, scallops)  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Salmon (canned, fresh and frozen),  
Sole, Flounder  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Cod, Haddock, Perch, Pollack,  
Catfish  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Light Canned Tuna  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)

### Other LOWER Fish and Shellfish

Anchovies  
Clams  
Herring  
Oyster  
Sardine  
Scallop  
Tilapia  
Trout (freshwater)  
Whitefish

### Fish MEDIUM in Mercury

**Women of Childbearing Age: Eat no more than 1 (one) 6 oz. meal per week. Children: Eat no more than one 4 oz. meal per week**



Bass (largemouth)  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Carp  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Perch  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



White Canned Tuna (Albacore)  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Bass (smallmouth)  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Channel Cat  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Trout  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Mahi Mahi  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Bullhead  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Drum-Sheepshead  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Walleye  
Sport Fish (fish you catch)



Halibut  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)

### Other MEDIUM Fish

Bass (saltwater, black, striped)  
Bluefish  
Lobster  
Monkfish  
Snapper  
Tuna (fresh, frozen not bigeye)

### Fish HIGH in Mercury

**Do Not Eat! Women of Childbearing Age and Children - do not eat these fish**



Shark  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Swordfish  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)



King Mackerel  
Commercial Fish (fish you buy)

### Other HIGHER Fish To Avoid

Chilean sea bass  
Grouper  
Marlin  
Orange roughy  
Red Snapper  
Rockfish (Pacific)  
Sturgeon (wild)  
Tuna, bluefin