

A Woman's Guide To Eating Fish Safely

Special Advice for Pregnant Women & Young Children

Locally caught fish are high in protein and good for you. However, some fish contain chemicals. Eating fish with these chemicals may affect the health of your unborn baby or young child.

If you are:

- pregnant,
- planning to have a baby within a year,
- a child under six years old,

You should:

- eat no more than one meal of fish a month from Connecticut's rivers, lakes and streams.
- NOT eat striped bass or large bluefish from Long Island Sound.



Read this brochure to find out other ways to protect your family when eating fish.

Pamphlet Based on 2000 Fish Advisory

Why Are These Chemicals Unhealthy?

Certain fish in Connecticut rivers, lakes and Long Island Sound contain mercury, PCBs and chlordane.

At high enough levels, these chemicals can cause nerve and kidney damage, poor growth, and learning problems.

If you eat too much of these fish, your unborn baby may be affected. That is why it is important for pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant to follow this advice.

What Is the CT Fish Consumption Advisory?

- Advice from the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- Tells how to safely eat fish from Connecticut's waters (rivers, ponds, lakes, and the ocean).
- You can get the Advisory brochure free. Call (860) 509-7742 and ask for a copy of **"If I Catch It, Can I Eat It?"**



Which Fish Should I Avoid Eating?

Pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant in the next year and young children should NOT eat the following fish from the listed water sources:

Connecticut River Carp, Catfish	Brewster Pond, Stratford Catfish, Bullhead
Housatonic River Trout, Carp, Catfish, Bass, White Perch, Bullhead	Union Pond, Manchester Bass, Carp, Catfish
Quinnipiac River (above the gorge) All species	Dodge Pond, Mystic Bass, Pickerel
Hanover Pond, Meriden All species	Silver Lake, Meriden Bass, Pickerel
Wyassup Lake, Stonington Bass, Pickerel	Lake McDonough, Barkhamstead Bass, Pickerel
Long Island Sound and Connected Rivers Striped Bass, or any Bluefish over 25 inches Other fish from the Sound are OK to eat	

How Can I Eat Fish Safely?

1. Follow the general statewide advisory (no more than one meal per month) and specific "Do Not Eat" advice shown in the table above.
2. You can eat most trout that are no bigger than 15 inches long. Do not eat trout from the Housatonic River.
3. Most seafood bought in stores is safe to eat without limits. Some important exceptions are listed in another section of this brochure.
4. When possible, eat smaller fish such as panfish (yellow perch, white suckers, sunfish).
5. Learn how to cook and clean fish. PCBs are mostly in the fatty portions of fish. To reduce PCB levels, it is very important to remove skin and other fatty parts. Cook fish on a rack (broil) so that fat can drip away from the flesh. These measures do not reduce mercury levels.

2000 Fish Advisory Survey

Please help us to understand how people use the fish consumption advisory by answering the following questions. We would also like to know what you think about this brochure. Please check the correct box for your answer and fill in the blank below for more information.

How often do you eat locally (Connecticut) caught fish?

- Not at all 1 meal per month 1 meal per week more than one meal per week

As a result of reading this brochure:

I am more aware of chemical contamination of fish in Connecticut waters and how eating locally caught fish can affect my family.

- yes no unsure

I will follow the guidelines for eating fish when feeding my family.

- yes no unsure

The brochure helped me to learn safe ways to clean and cook fish.

- yes no unsure

I plan on sharing the information with others I know that eat fish.

- yes no unsure

The information in the brochure was easy to understand.

- yes no unsure

Are printed methods like this brochure useful in educating the public?

- yes no unsure

Please suggest additional methods: _____

I am interested in receiving more fish consumption information.

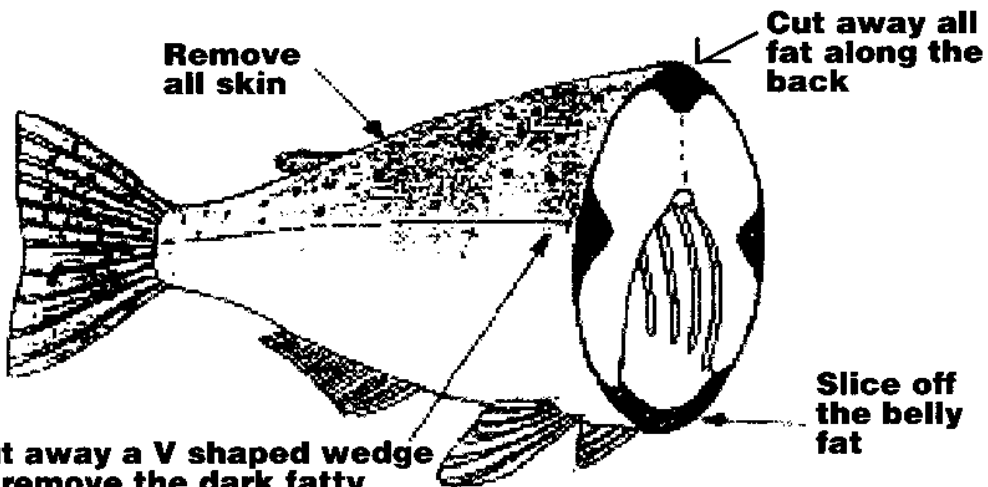
(If yes, please fill in below:)

- yes no unsure

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



Cut away a V shaped wedge to remove the dark fatty tissue along the entire length of the fillet

Remove and do not eat the organs, head, skin and the dark fatty tissue along the back bone, lateral lines and belly.

What About Fish From The Store?

Most fish from the store are safe to eat. However, *some* seafood has mercury levels that may be unhealthy for pregnant women, women planning to have a baby, and young children. They should follow this advice:

- * **Canned Tuna:** 1 to 2 meals per week (8 ounces).
Choose "Light Tuna" - it has less mercury than the "White" or "Chunk White" Tuna.
- * **Fresh or Frozen Tuna** (also called tuna steak):
1 meal per month.
- * **Swordfish or Shark:** Pregnant women should not eat.



Remember:

Don't stop eating fish – it is a good source of protein and good for you. You can eat fish and be healthy. Following this guide will help.

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