

**MAPS INSIDE**

# **NEW YORK CITY AREA**

**Health Advice on  
Eating Fish You Catch**



## Why We Have Advisories

Fishing is fun and fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Fish contain high quality protein, essential nutrients, healthy fish oils and are low in saturated fat. However, some fish contain chemicals at levels that may be harmful to health. To help people make healthier choices about which fish they eat, the New York State Department of Health issues advice about eating sportfish (fish you catch). The health advice about which fish to eat depends on:



### Where You Fish (see maps inside)

Fish from waters that are close to human activities and contamination sources are more likely to be contaminated than fish from remote marine waters. **In the New York City area, fish from the Long Island Sound or the ocean are less contaminated.**

### Who You Are

**Women of childbearing age (under 50) and children under 15 are advised to limit the kinds of fish they eat and how often they eat them.** Women who eat highly contaminated fish and become pregnant may have an increased risk of having children who are slower to develop and learn. Chemicals may have a greater effect on the development of young children or unborn babies. Also, some chemicals may be passed on in mother's milk.

Women beyond their childbearing years and men may face fewer health risks from some chemicals. For that reason, the advice for women over age 50 and men over age 15 allows them to eat more kinds of sportfish and more often (see tables, pages 4 and 6).



### What You Catch

**There is specific advice about limiting or not eating certain kinds of fish in the NYC area (see tables, pages 4 and 6).** Some species (kinds of fish) have higher levels of chemicals than others. In general, smaller fish are less contaminated than larger, older fish of the same species.

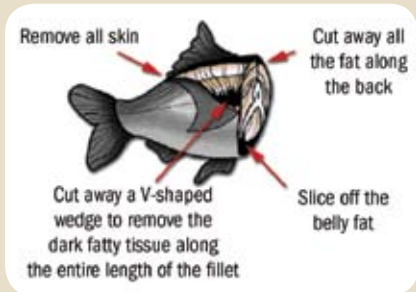


## Health Risks

The primary chemicals of concern in New York City waters are PCBs, dioxin and cadmium. These chemicals build up in your body over time. Health problems that may result from chemicals in fish range from small changes in health that are hard to detect to birth defects and cancer. (Visit [www.health.ny.gov/fish](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish) for more info.)

## Tips for Healthier Eating

- PCBs and dioxin are found at higher levels in the fat of fish. Reduce fat by properly trimming, skinning and cooking your catch:









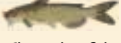








- Do not eat the soft “green stuff” (tomalley, mustard, liver or hepatopancreas) found in the body section of crabs and lobsters, and discard cooking liquid. Tomalley can contain high levels of chemicals, including PCBs, dioxin and cadmium.
  - Try to space out your fish meals. For example, if the advice is that you can eat up to four meals a month, don’t eat them all in the same week. This is particularly important for women and young children.
  - Bacteria, viruses or parasites may be in or on fish. Keep harvested fish cold. Wear gloves when skinning and trimming. Wash hands and surfaces often when preparing fish, and keep raw foods separate. Cook fish and shellfish thoroughly before eating.
- Cooking or soaking fish cannot eliminate the chemicals, but heat from cooking melts some of the fat. Broil, grill or bake the trimmed, skinned fish on a rack so that the fat drips away. Do not use drippings in sauces or gravies.



## UPPER Bay, Rivers and Kills

Raritan Bay west of Wolfe's Pond Park, Arthur Kill, Newark Bay, Kill Van Kull, Upper Bay of New York Harbor, Hudson River (south of Tappan Zee Bridge), Harlem River, East River

 <b>Fish</b>	 <b>Women Under 50 &amp; Children Under 15</b>	 <b>Men Over 15 &amp; Women Over 50</b>
 <i>American eel</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
 <i>Atlantic needlefish</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 1 meal/month</b>
 <i>Blue crabs</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b> <b>DON'T EAT tomalley</b>	<b>Up to 6 crabs/week</b> <b>DON'T EAT tomalley</b>
 <i>Bluefish</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 1 meal/month</b>
 <i>Carp</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 1 meal/month</b>
 <i>Channel catfish</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
 <i>Gizzard shad</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
 <i>Goldfish</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 1 meal/month</b>
 <i>Rainbow smelt</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 1 meal/month</b>
 <i>Striped bass</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT : Newark Bay, Arthur Kill, Kill Van Kull</b> <b>Up to 1 meal/month: from other waters listed above</b>
 <i>White catfish</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT : Hudson River, Harlem River, East River</b>
 <i>White perch</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT : Newark Bay, Arthur Kill, Kill Van Kull, Upper Bay, Western Raritan Bay</b> <b>Up to 1 meal/month : from other waters listed above</b>
<i>Other fish not listed</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>Up to 4 meals/month</b>



The health advice (see table, left) also applies to tributaries and connected waters if there are no dams, falls or barriers to stop the fish from moving upstream. This is because chemicals remain in fish when they move from one waterbody to another. If you are not sure about possible fish barriers near waters where you are fishing, call your DEC office listed on the back of this booklet.












DEC prohibits the harvest/possession of American eel for food from the Hudson, East and Harlem River, and taking American shad from the Hudson, East and Harlem Rivers and New York State Marine waters. See [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html) for fishing regulations.

Visit [www.health.ny.gov/fish](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish) for the latest fish advisory information.



## LOWER Bay, Ocean and Sound

Raritan Bay east of Wolfe's Pond Park, Lower Bay of New York Harbor, Jamaica Bay, Atlantic Ocean, Long Island Sound

 <b>Fish</b>	 <b>Women Under 50 &amp; Children Under 15</b>	 <b>Men Over 15 &amp; Women Over 50</b>
 <i>American eel</i>	<b>up to 1 meal/month</b>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>
 <i>Bluefish under 20 inches</i>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>
 <i>Bluefish over 20 inches</i>	<b>up to 1 meal/month</b>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>
 <i>Striped bass</i>	<b>up to 1 meal/month</b>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>
 <i>Weakfish under 25 inches</i>	<b>up to 1 meal/month</b>	<b>up to 4 meals/month</b>
 <i>Weakfish over 25 inches</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>up to 1 meal/month</b>
<i>Crab or lobster tomalley</i>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>	<b>DON'T EAT</b>

**New York State does not have advice for many fish in these waters because marine fish are generally less contaminated.**



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DEC regulations prohibit taking American shad from the Hudson, East and Harlem Rivers and New York State Marine waters. See [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html) for fishing regulations.

Visit [www.health.ny.gov/fish](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish) for the latest fish advisory information.



## Fish from Stores and Restaurants



The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the sale of commercial fish in markets. Due to concerns about mercury, FDA advises pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children to avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish.

Food and Drug Administration: (888) SAFEFOOD, (888) 723-3366

## More Information

### New York State Fish Advisories

Department of Health  
[www.health.ny.gov/fish](http://www.health.ny.gov/fish)  
(518) 402-7800  
(800) 458-1158  
email [BTSA@health.state.ny.us](mailto:BTSA@health.state.ny.us)

### Other Fish Information

Environmental Protection Agency  
[www.epa.gov/ost/fish](http://www.epa.gov/ost/fish)  
Food and Drug Administration  
[www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm110591.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm110591.htm)

### New York State Fishing

Department of Environmental  
Conservation (DEC)  
[www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html)

DEC Region 1  
(Nassau/Suffolk counties)  
Stony Brook, NY  
(631) 444-0280

DEC Region 2  
(New York City)  
Long Island City, NY  
(718) 482-4922

### Fishing marine waters

DEC Bureau of Finfish and Crustaceans  
East Setauket, NY  
(631) 444-0435