

Vermont fish advisory

This advisory is based on tests of hundreds of fish caught in Vermont waters in the past 10 years and scientific information about the harmful effects of mercury and, in the case of large lake trout in Lake Champlain and all fish in the Hoosic River, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls).

1 meal =
8 oz. uncooked fillet

Women of childbearing age
— particularly pregnant women,
women planning to get pregnant,
and breastfeeding mothers —
and children age 6 & under

All other individuals

GENERAL ADVISORY:

Brown Bullhead Pumpkinseed	No Advisory	No Advisory
Walleye	0 meals	No more than 1 meal/month
Lake Trout Smallmouth Bass Chain Pickerel American Eel	No more than 1 meal/month	No more than 3 meals/month
Largemouth Bass Northern Pike	No more than 2 meals/month	No more than 6 meals/month
Brook Trout Brown Trout Rainbow Trout Yellow Perch	No more than 3-4 meals/month	No Advisory
All Other Fish	No more than 2-3 meals/month	No more than 9 meals/month

SPECIAL ADVISORIES:

Lake Carmi - Walleye	No more than 4 meals/month	No Advisory
Lake Champlain - Lake Trout (larger than 25 in.)	0 meals (includes all children under 15)	No more than 1 meal/month
Hoosic River - All Fish	0 meals	0 meals

Deerfield Chain

(Grout Pond, Somerset Reservoir, Harriman Reservoir, Sherman Reservoir, and Searsburg Reservoir)

Brown Bullhead Brook Trout	No Advisory	No Advisory
Rainbow Trout Brown Trout (smaller than 14 in.) Rock Bass Rainbow Smelt Yellow Perch	No more than 1 meal/month	No more than 3 meals/month
Brown Trout (larger than 14 in.) All Other Fish	0 meals	No more than 1 meal/month

15 Mile Falls Chain (Comerford Reservoir and Moore Reservoir)

All Fish	0 meals	No more than 2 meals/month
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15 Mile Falls Chain (McIndoes Reservoir)

Yellow Perch	No more than 2 meals/month	No more than 6 meals/month
All Other Fish	No more than 1 meal/month	No more than 3 meals/month

to protect yourself & your baby:

- Discuss the fish you eat with your health care provider.
- Carefully choose the fish you eat while you are pregnant or nursing.
- Make changes in how you eat fish: what kind, from where, how much and how often.



For more information, contact:

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mercury in fish

What you should know if you are
pregnant, planning to be pregnant,
nursing a baby, or have young children.

mercury & your health

Did you know there are harmful levels of contaminants in some fish? This is a special concern if you are pregnant, planning to be pregnant, or nursing a baby.

Contaminated fish may not look, smell, or taste different. But they can still harm you and your baby.

Mercury builds up in fish, especially in fish that eat other fish.

Mercury is a naturally-occurring metal which does not break down in the environment, but recycles between land, water, and air. Some mercury in Vermont waters occurs naturally. Mercury is also released from coal-burning power plants and from burning household and industrial waste. Mercury collects in the soil, water, sediment, in microscopic animals, and in fish, especially in fish that eat other fish.

Mercury is a health hazard for babies and young children.

You can build up harmful levels of mercury in your body without knowing it. Mercury can harm an unborn baby during pregnancy. A woman can pass mercury on to her baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Mercury damages the nervous system. In high amounts, mercury can cause serious mental and physical retardation in a baby. Lower amounts can delay walking and talking, and can cause other effects, such as learning problems.

A woman's exposure before pregnancy matters, too. Women should follow the fish consumption advice given to pregnant and nursing women before becoming pregnant. It takes up to one year to rid the body of mercury.

about eating fish:

Don't stop eating fish. Just be careful of the fish you eat.

Fish is a good source of protein, and low in fat. You can still get the benefits of eating fish by following the Vermont Fish Advisory, and choosing safer types of fish, safer places to catch fish, and being careful about how often you eat fish and how much you eat.

REMEMBER: Consider ALL sources of fish you eat when making your choices.

Avoid older, larger fish, and fish that eat other fish (like walleye or smallmouth bass).

Fish build up contaminants from the water they live in and the food they eat. Older or bigger fish have had more time to build up contaminants in their bodies. Fish that eat other fish also build up more contaminants. Walleye and smallmouth bass, for example, tend to have high levels of mercury.

Be careful about how much fish you eat and how often you eat it. Over time, your body can get rid of some contaminants. You can help this process by eating smaller amounts of fish, and eating fish less often.

Some fish in Vermont lakes and rivers are not safe for pregnant or nursing women or children age 6 and under. Check the Vermont Fish Advisory to find fish types and locations that are safe.

Remember, women who may become pregnant within one year should follow the same precautions as pregnant or nursing women.

What about store-bought or canned fish?

The fish or shellfish you buy from your grocery store or fish market can also have contaminants. Although there are laws to limit these contaminants, not all commercial fish are tested.

The FDA recently advised women of childbearing age, women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children to not to eat swordfish, shark, king mackerel or tile fish. Canned tuna has mercury levels comparable to many Vermont-caught fish. It is safe for a pregnant woman to eat up to one 6-ounce can of tuna each week — if it is the only source of mercury-contaminated fish, including sport-caught fish, eaten that same week.