



Fish Consumption Advice for the St. Louis River Area of Concern

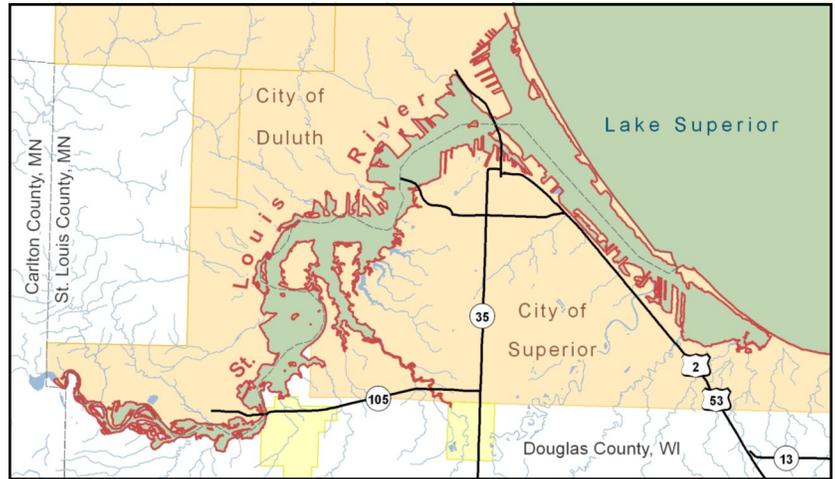


Why should I eat fish?

Fish are a nutritious family food. Modest amounts of fish can provide health benefits, although little additional benefit is gained by eating more than 1-2 servings per week. Some of the benefits of catching and eating fish include:

- Low cost and fun to catch your own fish
- Low in fat, yet high in protein
- Great source of vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids

However, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury in the St. Louis River pose health risks and prompt the need for fish consumption advisories (*see the advisory table on page 2*).



Where do PCBs and mercury come from?

PCBs are man-made chemicals that were used in electrical equipment, industrial processes, and manufacturing and recycling of carbonless copy paper. Restrictions on PCB use, manufacturing, and disposal began in the 1970's.

Mercury occurs naturally in the environment but is also released into the air through industrial activities. Airborne mercury falls on land, streams, lakes, and wetlands. Mercury is then converted to methylmercury, a form that bioaccumulates in the foodchain reaching higher levels in some fish. Mercury accumulates to higher concentrations in larger, predatory fish and in some waterbodies.

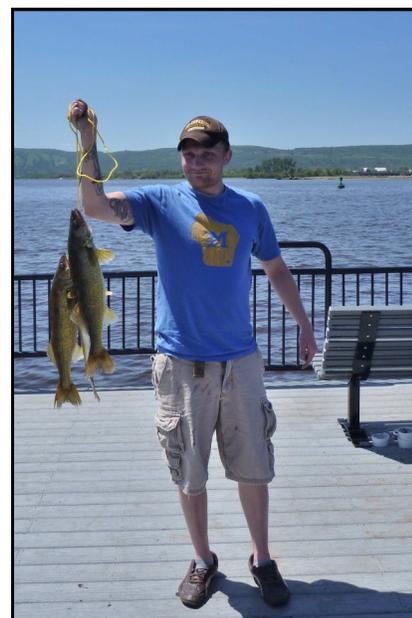
What are the health risks?

PCBs

- Developmental impairments in children
- Harmful to the reproductive system
- Associated with a higher risk of cancer
- Harmful to the immune system
- Alters thyroid hormones

Mercury

- Damage to developing brains of children, which can cause learning disabilities
- Memory loss
- Heart disease
- Loss of coordination affecting vision, hearing and speech



Fisherman's catch on the St. Louis River.
Photo by Terry Heatlie, NOAA

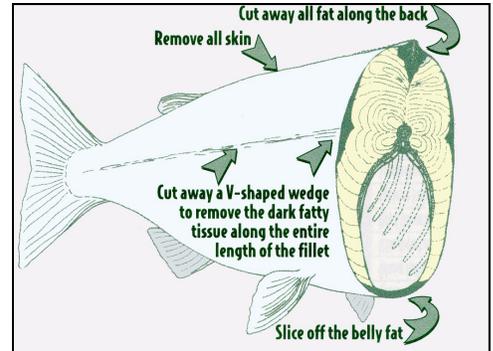
Tell me about more about contaminants in fish

PCBs	Mercury
Resistant to degradation	
Bioaccumulate to higher concentrations through the food chain	
Younger, smaller fish have lower amounts of contaminants than larger, older predator fish	
Accumulates in the fatty tissue, so fatty fish like carp and catfish have higher levels	Accumulates throughout a fish's tissue - trimming, skinning, and cooking will <i>not</i> reduce contaminant levels

How should I prepare and cook my fish?

Proper cleaning and cooking techniques can reduce PCB levels by up to 70%. Follow the following preparation techniques:

- Fillet your fish
- Remove the skin
- Trim away belly fat, fat on the backsides and fatty dark meat
- Do not eat the eggs
- Bake, broil, or grill
- Discard all liquids and frying oils



St. Louis River/Superior Harbor *(see St. Louis River and Douglas County advice in the Choose Wisely booklet)*

Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:

1 meal per week - Panfish and Bullheads



and
1 meal per month - Walleye under 20", Pike, Bass, Catfish, Carp, Burbot, and all other species;



Do not eat - Walleye over 20" and Muskies

Women beyond childbearing years and men may eat:

Unrestricted - Panfish and Bullheads

1 meal per week - Walleye under 20", Pike, Bass, Catfish under 18", Burbot, and all other species;



and
1 meal per month - Walleye over 20", Carp, Catfish over 18", and Muskies

Lake Superior and tributaries including the St. Louis River

Species	Eat no more than 1 meal/week	Eat no more than 1 meal/month	Eat no more than 1 meal every 2 months	Do Not Eat
Brown trout, Chubs, Coho salmon, Lake herring, Lake whitefish, Rainbow trout	All sizes			
Chinook salmon	Under 30"	Over 30"		
Lake trout	Under 22"	22" - 37"	Over 37"	
Lake sturgeon		Over 50"		
Siscowet		Under 29"	29" - 36"	Over 36"
Walleye and Burbot - <i>See above</i>				

See the WDNR's website or the *Choose Wisely* booklet for updates on fish safe-eating guidelines. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/eatyourcatch.html>