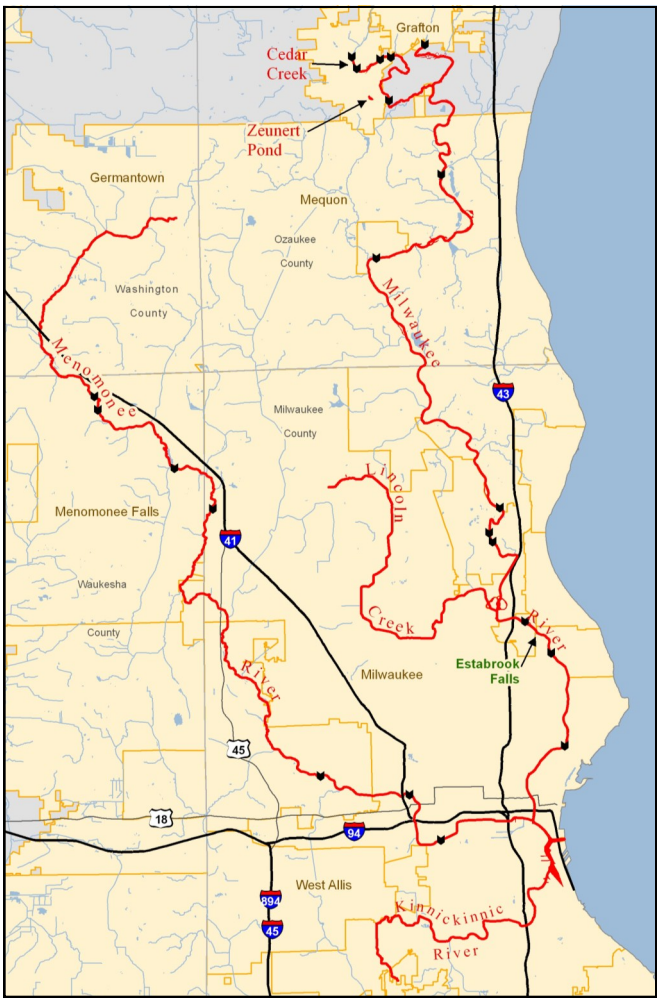
Fish Consumption Advice for the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern

Benefits of eating your catch

Fish are a nutritious family food. Some of the benefits of catching and eating 1-2 servings of fish per week 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) pose health risks and prompt the need for fish consumption advisories. The advice for this area varies by species and location on the river *(see the advisory table on page 2)*. Fish from Cedar Creek and Zeunert Pond should not be eaten.



What are polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)?

PCBs are man-made chemicals that were used in electrical equipment, industrial processes, and manufacturing and recycling of carbonless copy paper. PCBs were discharged into Cedar Creek, the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers, and Lincoln Creek for decades before it was discovered that these chemicals build up in the environment and pose health risks to humans and wildlife. Restrictions on PCB use, manufacturing, and disposal began in the 1970s, but PCBs remain in the sediment of these rivers. Efforts are underway to remediate contaminants in the affected river sediments.

Tell me about PCBs in fish and what types of fish are safe to eat.

- PCBs are resistant to degradation and bioaccumulate to higher concentrations through the food chain
- Younger, smaller fish have lower amounts of PCBs than larger, older predator fish
- PCBs accumulate in the fatty tissues, so fatty fish such as carp and catfish have higher levels of PCBs
- No fish from Cedar Creek and Zeunart Pond are currently safe to eat

Why are the health risks?

PCBs are stored in your body fat for years. Your health risk may increase as you eat more fish that are high in PCBs. Health risks include:

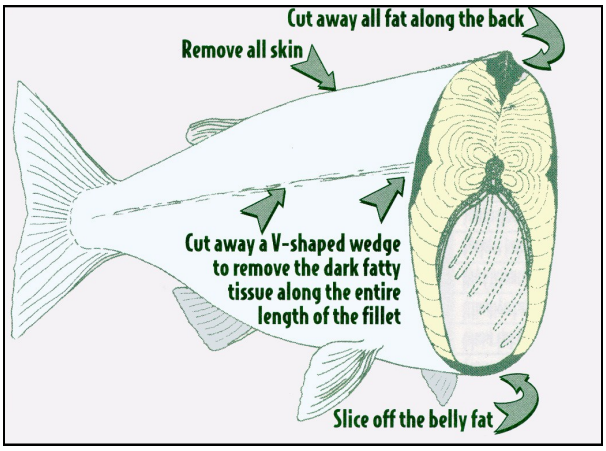
- Developmental impairments in children
- Harmful to the reproductive system
- Associated with a higher risk of cancer
- Harmful to the immune system
- Alters thyroid hormones

Milwaukee River at Estabrook Park

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



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
Cedar Creek from Bridge Rd in the Village of Cedarburg downstream to Milwaukee River and Zeunert Pond				
All Species				**All Sizes**
Milwaukee River from the city of Grafton downstream to Estabrook Falls and Lincoln Creek				
Black crappie, bluegill, rock bass	All Sizes			
Bullhead, largemouth bass, northern pike, redhorse, smallmouth bass, walleye		All Sizes		
Channel catfish			All Sizes	
Carp				**All Sizes**
Milwaukee River from Estabrook Falls downstream to the Estuary including Menomonee and Kinnickinnic Rivers				
Yellow perch	All sizes			
Bluegill, channel catfish, rock bass, smallmouth bass, walleye under 22”		All Sizes		
Black crappie, northern pike, redhorse, walleye over 22”, white sucker			All Sizes	
Carp				**All Sizes**
Lake Michigan species that migrate into the Milwaukee area rivers ***(Lake Michigan PCB advisory)***				
Brown trout		Less than 28”	Larger than 28”	
Chinook salmon		All sizes		
Rainbow trout	Less than 22”	Larger than 22”		
Coho salmon		All sizes		

See WDNR’s website: dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing//consumption