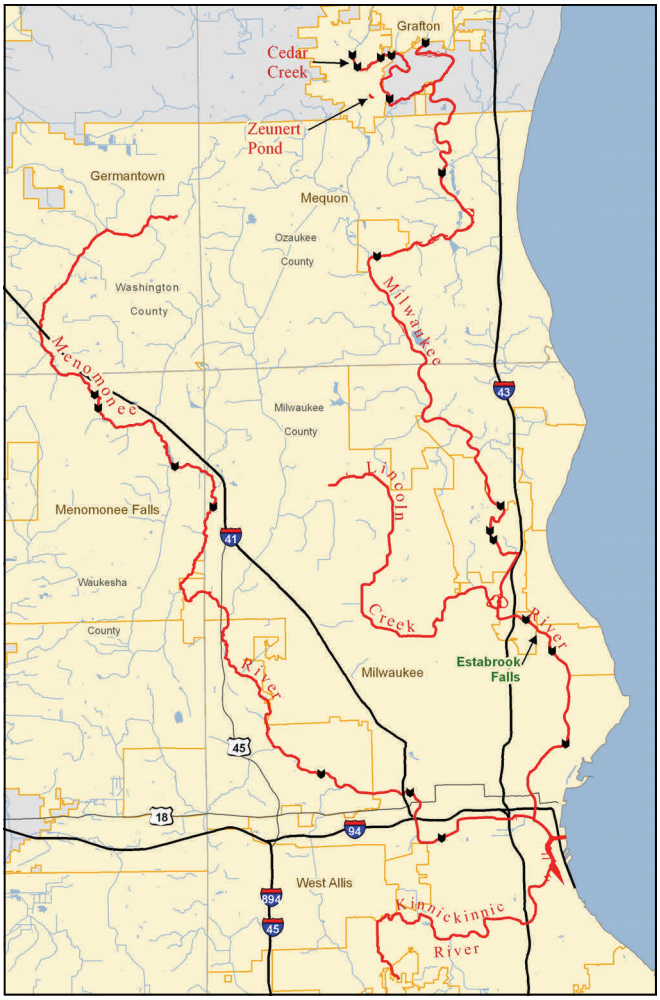
# Fish Consumption Advice for the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern

## 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) in the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers, in addition to Lincoln Creek 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 caught in 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 the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers, as well as 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 tissue, 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.

## What 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:

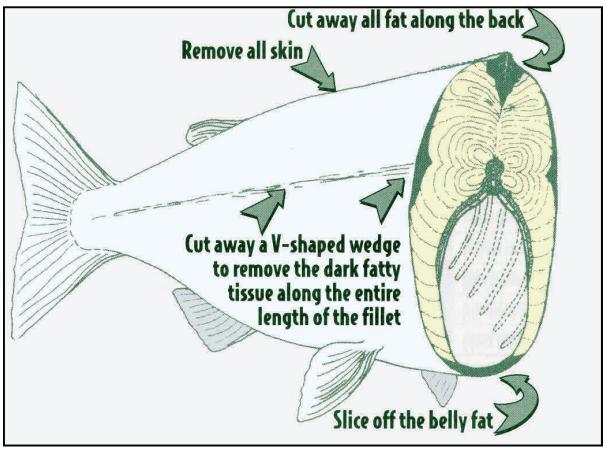
- Developmental impairments in children
- Harm to the reproductive system
- Higher risk of cancer
- Harm to the immune system
- Altered thyroid function

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, including Zeunert Pond downstream to Milwaukee River** | | | | |
| **All Species** | | | | **All Sizes** |
| **Milwaukee River from the city of Grafton downstream to Estabrook Falls** | | | | |
| Black crappie, Rock bass | All Sizes | | | |
| Largemouth bass, Redhorse, Smallmouth bass, Walleye | | All Sizes | | |
| Northern pike | | | All Sizes | |
| **Carp** | | | | **All Sizes** |
| **Milwaukee River from Estabrook Falls downstream to the estuary including Menomonee River, Kinnickinnic River, and Lincoln Creek** | | | | |
| Yellow Perch | All sizes | | | |
| Bluegill, Channel catfish, Rock bass, Small-mouth bass, Walleye | | All Sizes | | |
| Black crappie, Northern pike, Redhorse, White sucker | | | All Sizes | |
| **Carp** | | | | **All Sizes** |
| **Milwaukee River from city of Grafton to the estuary including Menomonee River, Kinnickinnic River, and Lincoln Creek** ***(Lake Michigan PCB advisory)*** | | | | |
| Brown trout | | Less than 25” | Larger than 25” | |
| Chinook salmon | | Less than 36” | Larger than 36” | |
| Rainbow trout | Less than 22” | Larger than 22” | | |
| Coho salmon | | All sizes | | |

See the WDNR’s website or the *Choose Wisely* booklet for updates on fish safe-eating guidelines. http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption/