

What Can I Do?

1

Look up safe eating guidelines.

Go to: www.oehha.ca.gov/fish or the back of your fishing regulations booklet and look up the places where you go fishing for advice about how much fish of each kind you can safely eat from that location.

No information? Not necessarily safe. If the location or kind of fish you are interested in is not listed, it does NOT mean it's safe to eat. It just means that not enough information has been collected to tell either way.

If the lake or reservoir where you are fishing is not specifically listed, you should follow the state-issued guidelines to the right: →

2

Know your fish.

The information provided in this brochure is designed to help you make good choices about the fish you catch, based on which fish generally contain more mercury than others.

What we do know:

- Smaller, younger fish have less mercury than older, larger fish.
- Predatory fish (ones that eat other fish, for example bass or brown trout) have higher mercury.
- Fish that have been planted generally have lower mercury.

3

Make your voice heard!

We all deserve to eat fish we catch, and to have good information about how to protect ourselves and our families. Tell your elected officials it's time to clean up mercury from lakes and rivers in the Sierra, and provide more information about which fish are safe to eat.

A Guide to Eating Fish from California Lakes and Reservoirs

Without Site-Specific Advice



Women
(18-45 Years)

Children
(1-17 Years)

2 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING A WEEK

0 DO NOT EAT



Women
(46+ Years)

Men
(18+ Years)

6 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING A WEEK

Eat the Good Fish

Eating fish that are low in chemicals may provide health benefits to children and adults.



Avoid the Bad Fish

Eating fish with higher levels of chemicals like mercury or PCBs may cause health problems in children and adults.



Choose the Right Fish

Chemicals may be more harmful to unborn babies and children.



Rainbow Trout
♥ high in omega-3s



Catfish



Sunfish Species



Brown Trout
16 inches or less
♥ high in omega-3s



Bullhead



Black Bass Species



Carp



Brown Trout
over 16 inches

Serving Size

A serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

For Adults



For Children



Fish Preparation

Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.

Eat only the skinless fillet



Eat only the meat



More Information

Many lakes and reservoirs in the Sierra Nevada have site-specific guidelines for eating fish. Check for site-specific information for the water bodies where you fish at: www.oehha.ca.gov/fish



web www.oehha.ca.gov/fish
email fish@oehha.ca.gov
phone (916) 324-7572

If you eat fish, you need to know about mercury.

Mercury: Toxic in the Body

- Mercury can damage the brain, central nervous system, immune system, kidneys and heart.
- In pregnant women, mercury can cause permanent learning disabilities in the developing fetus, even at very low levels.
- Children are particularly vulnerable.
- If you feel you, your baby or your child may be at risk, talk to your doctor.
- Are you **pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant?** Mercury stays in the human body for about 1 year. Start making healthy choices now.

Eating Fish Safely

- Avoid large predatory fish whether wild-caught or store bought.
- Eat smaller younger fish, which generally contain less mercury.
- Mercury is stored in the entire fish. You cannot clean the head, guts, fat and skin to get rid of it. Other toxins, like PCBs may be stored there so trimming off these areas is still a good idea.
- Check fish you plan to eat at the EPA and OEHHA websites. You can also visit a mercury calculator website such as the one at www.gotmercury.org.

Gold Rush Impacts

The footprint of the California Gold Rush stretches from the Sierra to the sea and includes the widespread distribution of toxics such as mercury, arsenic and lead.

Since 2006, The Sierra Fund has worked to address the legacy impacts of the Gold Rush in order to improve resiliency in our region.

Special thanks to the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) and OEHHA for use of material included in this brochure.

www.ciea-health.org
www.oehha.ca.gov

About The Sierra Fund

The Sierra Fund's mission is to restore ecosystem and community resiliency in the Sierra Nevada region.

www.sierrafund.org

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Fish, Mercury



and
You

*how to safely eat
fish you catch
in the Sierra Nevada*

*Addressing Gold Rush Impacts
in the Sierra Nevada*