

**NJLINCS Health Alert Network**  
**Public Health Alert**

*Distributed by the New Jersey Department of Health*

Subject: 2019 Fish Consumption Advisories

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The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health offers recreational fish consumption advisories for the state's rivers, lakes and ponds as part of an ongoing contaminants in fish monitoring program.

The DEP and DOH have issued updated advisories for 2019 to incorporate results of new fish sampling for lakes, ponds and reservoirs that flow into the Upper Delaware River and the Passaic River Regions. We advise all anglers to get the latest advisories for the specific water body they fish by visiting [www.fishsmarteatsmartnj.org](http://www.fishsmarteatsmartnj.org). These advisories provide information on how to reduce your risk by avoiding or limiting consumption of certain fish. They also offer guidance in how to prepare the fish you eat from local waters in ways that reduce your exposure to PCBs, dioxins and other contaminants.

Since 1982, when research began to show elevated levels of potentially harmful contaminants in certain fish and crabs in some New Jersey waters, fish consumption advisories were issued to guide citizens on safe consumption practices. Fish consumption advisories are developed through a scientific process that includes collecting samples of fish from waters throughout the state and analyzing them for various chemical contaminants, such as dioxin, PCBs and mercury. The contaminant levels in the fish are then evaluated using state and federal guidelines for protecting human health.

For much of the population, advisories can range from "no restrictions" to a recommendation to "do not eat". For the high-risk population - which includes pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant, nursing mothers, infants and children - advisories can range from "one meal per week" to "do not eat".

Certain fish may contain contaminants, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins and mercury from the water they live in and the food they eat. Contaminants such as dioxin and PCBs are classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as probable cancer-causing substances in humans. Elevated levels of mercury can pose health risks to the human nervous system, particularly to developing fetuses. Therefore, it is a good idea to follow a few precautions in consuming recreationally caught fish and crabs, particularly if you eat them often.