

Guide to Eating Fish



from the

**Saginaw Bay
Watershed**

Most fish are a healthy food choice. Fish are low in saturated fat. The oils found in fish are healthy for babies and children, and the American Heart Association recommends eating fish as a way to possibly protect against heart disease in adults.

However, not all fish are equal. Some fish have harmful chemicals in them that cannot be seen, smelled or tasted.

This brochure will help you to learn more about which fish are safe for your family to eat and which fish should be avoided from the Saginaw Bay Watershed.



Who is at greatest risk from harmful chemicals in fish?

- ✓ Breast-fed babies
- ✓ Unborn babies
- ✓ Children under 15 years old
- ✓ People with ongoing health problems, such as heart conditions, thyroid disorders and immune system disorders



What health problems can be caused by chemicals in fish?

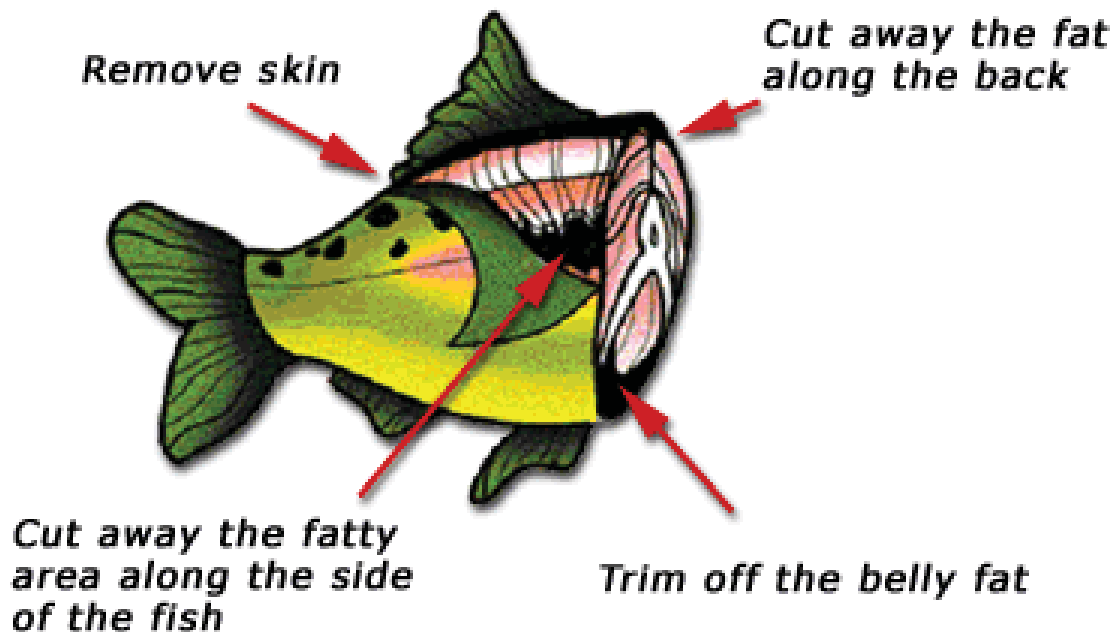
- ✓ Harm to a child's brain development, which can cause learning disorders and behavioral problems
- ✓ Decrease in the body's ability to fight off illness
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Liver damage
- ✓ Mercury poisoning



REMEMBER: Clean and cook the fish properly!

- ☑ First, trim away the fat (see the picture below). Most of the chemicals are stored in the fat, except for mercury. Mercury cannot be removed from fish.
- ☑ Take off the dark fatty tissue along the backbone, sides and belly. Take out organs such as the liver and stomach. Do not eat any of these fish parts.
- ☑ Either remove the skin or poke holes in it before cooking. This allows fat to drain off.
- ☑ Bake, broil or grill the fish so that the fat drips away.
- ☑ If you deep fry fish, throw the oil away when you're done. Do not re-use the oil.

Directions for trimming a fish:



IMPORTANT!

Inland Lakes MERCURY Advisory

This mercury advisory is for fish from all Michigan inland lakes, reservoirs, and impoundments. The following fish should be avoided, or meals limited, because of mercury contamination:

Any size:

- largemouth bass
- smallmouth bass
- muskellunge
- Rock bass, perch, or crappie over 9 inches
- northern pike
- walleye

- or -



Children and women who are pregnant or can become pregnant should NOT eat more than 1 meal per month of these fish.

Others should NOT eat more than 1 meal per week of these fish.

Going fishing?

The fish on pages 7-8 have been tested for chemicals. They are safe for everyone to eat, including young children and pregnant women.

- ☑ Page 7 has the list of rivers
- ☑ Page 8 has the list of lakes

Use the lists to find the following information:

- ① **Name of the lake or river**
- ② **Type of fish**
- ③ **Safe number of meals**



Bluegill and sunfish are generally safe choices for meals from any of the lakes and rivers in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.



Saginaw Area Rivers: Meal Guide for the Entire Family

① Choose a river	② Type of fish	③ Safe number of meals
Au Sable River (at Oscoda)	Walleye	Under 18 inches: 1 meal per week
Bad River	Northern Pike	1 meal per week
Flint River	Smallmouth Bass	1 meal per week
Kearsley Creek and Reservoir (Genessee County)	Carp Largemouth Bass	Under 26 inches: 1 meal per week Under 18 inches: Unlimited
Sebewaing River	Northern Pike	1 meal per week
Shiawassee River (downstream of Owosso)	Rock Bass Smallmouth Bass	1 meal per week 1 meal per week
Thread Creek	Largemouth Bass	Unlimited

Saginaw Area Lakes: Meal Guide for the Entire Family

① Choose a lake	② Type of fish	③ Safe number of meals
Holloway Reservoir (Genesee County)	Black Crappie	Unlimited
	Smallmouth Bass	Unlimited
Lobdell Lake (Genesee County)	Carp	Under 18 inches: Unlimited 18-30 inches: 1 meal per week
Mott Reservoir	Walleye	Unlimited
Lake Ponemah (Genesee County)	Carp	Under 22 inches: 1 meal per week
Sanford Lake (Midland County)	Black Crappie	Unlimited
	Channel Catfish	Under 26 inches: 1 meal per week
	Rock Bass	Unlimited
Wixom Lake (Gladwin County)	Northern Pike	Under 30 inches: 1 meal per week

Terms used in this booklet

“Women & Children”

Women ages 15 years and older who are pregnant or can become pregnant in the future; children under the age of 15 years old

“Adults”

Adult men; boys ages 15 years and older; women who cannot become pregnant

How big is “1 meal” of fish?

- ☑ **For adults:** A meal is 8 ounces of uncooked fish, or 6 ounces of cooked fish (about the size of a man’s hand).
- ☑ **For children:** A meal is 4 ounces of uncooked fish, or 3 ounces of cooked fish (about the size of the palm of a man’s hand).



What does an “unlimited amount” of fish mean?

When the meal advice says “unlimited,” it means that the fish have been tested, and they do not have high amounts of chemicals. You can eat these fish as often as you like.

Terms used in this booklet

What does it mean if a fish I like to eat isn't listed here?

This booklet only includes some of the more common fish in the Saginaw Bay waters. Please check the *Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide* for more information. If the fish is not listed there, it means the species of fish has not yet been tested for contaminants.

What if I serve different kinds of fish on different days that are listed as “1 meal per week,” is that OK?

No. ALL fish on the list that are recommended as “1 meal per week” should only be eaten once per week. For example:



If you serve a **largemouth bass caught in the Flint River** on Tuesday, you should not serve your family a small **channel catfish from Sanford Lake** on Friday. They are different fish, from different locations, but BOTH are recommended as only “1 meal per week” on the list.



However, if you serve a **largemouth bass caught in the Flint River** on Tuesday, you can serve a **largemouth bass from Thread Creek** on Wednesday and a **walleye from the Mott Reservoir** on Friday. The Flint River bass is only recommended for “1 meal per week,” but meals for Thread Creek’s largemouth bass and Mott Reservoir’s walleye are “unlimited.”

You can find safe fish!

- ☑ Fish from the Saginaw Bay Watershed that are safe for everyone are listed on pages 7-8 of this booklet.
- ☑ Other waters with fish advisories in the Saginaw Bay Watershed are listed below.

Rivers and Creeks		Lakes (County)
Au Sable	Rifle	Caro Impoundment (Tuscola)
Bad	Saginaw	Holloway Reservoir (Genesee)
Cass	Sebewaing	Kearsley Reservoir (Genesee)
Cheboyganing	Shiawassee	Lake Huron
Chippewa	Tawas	Saginaw Bay
Flint	Thread	Ponemah (Genesee)
Kawkawlin	Tittabawassee	Sanford (Midland)
Pine		Thompson (Livingston)
		Tobico Wetland (Bay)
		Woodland (Livingston)

For complete advisory information, read:

- ☑ ***Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide***
A booklet that lists all the fish advisories for waterbodies in Michigan



Other brochures:

- ☑ ***Eat Safe Fish***
A brochure that tells you about eating local and grocery store fish, with cleaning and cooking tips
- ☑ ***Eat Safe Wild Game***
A brochure that explains the wild game advisory for the Saginaw River and Tittabawassee River floodplains

To get free copies of any of the brochures listed above, call 1-800-648-6942.

**You can also visit:
www.michigan.gov/fishandgameadvisory**

Area of Concern

The Saginaw River/Bay is one of Michigan's 14 Areas of Concern (AOC) or "toxic hot spots" because the river and bay suffered from severe pollution problems. It is listed as an AOC because of the fish tainting, contaminated sediments, fish consumption advisories, high bacteria, nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, degraded fisheries, and loss of significant recreational value.

For more information, visit: www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/.

Fish Consumption Advisory versus Fish Tainting

Fish consumption advisory (FCA) is not the same as Fish Tainting. Fish Tainting refers to fish fillets that smell or taste odd. FCA refers to chemical pollution that builds up in fish flesh, has no taste or odor, and may cause harm to a person if eaten too often.

For more information, contact the
Michigan Department of Community Health:

1-800-MI-TOXIC
(1-800-648-6942)

or visit:

www.michigan.gov/fishandgameadvisory



*Michigan Department
of Community Health*

