

# Three Ways to Choose Safe Fish from Torch Lake

**#1** Use this as a guide to find fish that are generally lower in chemicals.

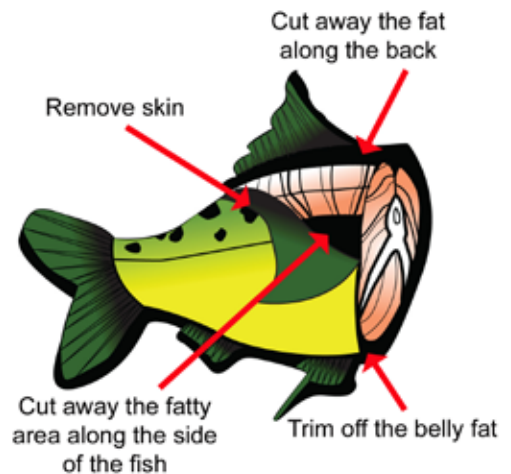
These fish are lower in chemicals, and are better to eat.

Rock Bass      Bluegill  
Yellow Perch      Crappie  
Walleye      Northern Pike  
Smallmouth Bass      Largemouth Bass  
Brown Trout      Whitefish  
Lake Trout      Catfish  
Carp

These fish are higher in chemicals.  
Use the Michigan Fish Advisory to find safer fish.

**#2** Trim and cook your fish the right way to remove up to half of the chemicals!

- ☑ 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 all 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 can drip away.
- ☑ If you deep fry fish, throw the oil away when you're done. Do not re-use the oil.



**#3** Follow the MDCH fish advisory for Torch Lake.

**Torch Lake Fish Advisory for Women & Children\***

**EAT ALL YOU WANT**  
Yellow Perch under 12 inches

CHOOSE **ONE** OPTION

**OPTION 1:**  
FOUR MEALS PER MONTH  
Brown Trout under 18 inches  
Lake Whitefish under 18 inches

- or -

**OPTION 2:**  
PICK **ONE** FROM THIS LIST PER MONTH  
Brown Trout over 18 inches  
Smallmouth Bass (any size)  
Yellow Perch over 12 inches

**DO NOT EAT**  
Lake Trout (any size)  
Lake Whitefish over 18 inches

**Torch Lake Fish Advisory for Men & Women\*\***

**EAT ALL YOU WANT**  
Brown Trout (any size)  
Lake Whitefish (any size)  
Yellow Perch under 12 inches

**FOUR MEALS PER MONTH**  
Smallmouth Bass (any size)  
Yellow Perch over 12 inches

**DO NOT EAT**  
Lake Trout (any size)

# Eat Safe Fish from Torch Lake

(in Antrim County)

A Guide to Catching Fish that are Healthy for You and Your Family.



\*Advisory for boys and girls under the age of 15 and women ages 15-45 years old. \*\*Advisory for men 15 years or older and women over 45 years old.

**For More Information...**

To request a free copy of the Michigan Fish Advisory, please call:

1-800-648-6942  
or visit us online at  
[www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish)



## About the Advisory

Each year, a selection of fish from Michigan's waters are tested for chemicals. The information collected is used to update the **Michigan Fish Advisory**.

In 2009, fillets of lake trout from Torch Lake were included in this annual testing. These fillets were found to have high levels of dioxins.



The average dioxin level in Torch Lake lake trout fillets is approximately 10 to 100 times greater than dioxin levels in grocery store fish.

At the levels measured, the Michigan Department of Community Health recommends that:

- **NO ONE** eat lake trout
- **women and children avoid eating whitefish that are over 18 inches long**

You will find the specific limits for eating Torch Lake fish on the back of this brochure.

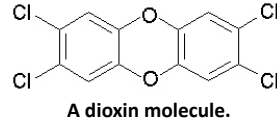
Use the **Michigan Fish Advisory** to find recommendations for eating other fish that have been tested from Michigan's waters.



## Dioxin & Your Health

Dioxins are a family of chemicals that may cause illness in people.

Eating a fish contaminated with dioxin will not make you sick right away. However, the chemicals will build up in your body after several years of eating these fish on a regular basis. They may cause health problems later.



**It's important to realize that not everyone who is exposed to dioxins will experience health problems.**



Several factors, including genetics, determine whether or not a person may develop problems after being exposed.

Some possible health effects of dioxin include:

- cancer
- diabetes
- disruption of the endocrine, immune and reproductive systems
- developmental effects in children

Following this advisory is very important for women and children. Because babies' and children's bodies are smaller, they can be affected by smaller amounts of chemicals.

## How do I know if I've been exposed to dioxin?

Even if you don't eat fish, you have probably been exposed to dioxin. How much dioxin depends on several factors, including:

- your age
- your diet
- your occupation

According to the US Food and Drug



Administration (FDA), most dioxin exposure occurs through food, with over 95% coming from animal fats.

Although it is possible to test the amount of dioxin in your blood, MDCH and the FDA do not recommend screening. Knowing your dioxin level is not useful for predicting disease. Please talk to your doctor about this issue if you have concerns.

## What can I do to reduce the amount of dioxin in my body?

The best way to reduce your overall dioxin level is by eating fewer animal fats and following the advice given in the **Michigan Fish Advisory**.



## How did dioxin get into Torch Lake?

Dioxin can come from local, regional or national sources. No local source of dioxin has been found on the shores of Torch Lake.

The dioxin found in Torch Lake lake



trout is likely from regional or national sources and has been entering the lake for decades via

the air. Because Torch Lake is deep and cold, similar to the Great Lakes, it holds onto dioxin long enough to enter the food chain and build up in the fish.

The good news is that studies have shown the amount of dioxin in the environment has been declining. This suggests that there is less dioxin pollution today than in the past.

## Is it still safe to swim in Torch Lake?



Yes, the amount of dioxin in the air and water is very small. Boating or swimming in the lake is safe.

### Identifying lake trout



Look for: two dorsal fins including one adipose fin, light spots on darker gray background, lower fins edged with white, tail forked, 11 rays in anal fin. (Source: DNRE)