

Introducing the Michigan Department of Community Health

new & improved  
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# Eat Safe Fish Guides

## I asked for the *Michigan Fish Advisory* - why did I get this *Eat Safe Fish Guide*?

This year, the new *Eat Safe Fish Guides* (*ESF Guides*) are replacing the old *Michigan Fish Advisory*. These guides will still help you figure out what is safe to eat and how often, but they are designed to be much easier for everyone to use! As always, if you have any questions, you can call us at 1-800-648-6942 from 7:30am til 5pm, Monday-Friday.

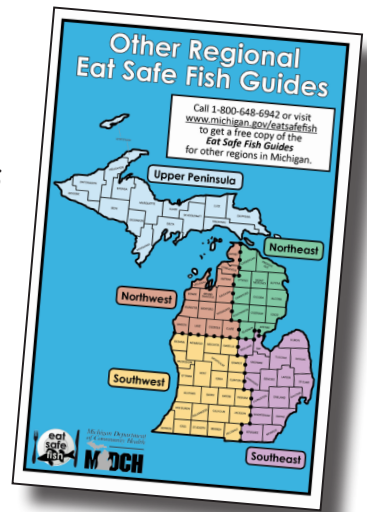
## About the *New Eat Safe Fish Guides*:

### You can take it with you!

- One of the first things you'll notice about the new *Eat Safe Fish Guides* are their small size. The *ESF Guides* were developed to fit in a tackle box or glove box so you can take it with you.

### It's regional.

- To find a lake or river in the old *Michigan Fish Advisory*, you needed to know what Great Lakes watershed it was in. That wasn't always easy. This is why the new *ESF Guides* are regional.
- On page 16 of each of the *ESF Guides*, you'll find a list of counties included in that *ESF Guide*. At the end of the booklet, there is an index that lists all the lakes and rivers alphabetically. Now you can quickly find a place to go fishing and see which fish are your best choice.



### It's simple, but complete.

- When you open up your *ESF Guide*, you will find several pages that give you an overview of what is included, help you ID the fish you catch, explain new terms used in the *ESF Guides*, show you ways to make your fish meal even safer, and answer questions that people often have about choosing safer fish. If you just want to get started, turn to page 15.

### Some guidelines are different than before, but don't worry!

- You might be able to eat more fish from your favorite fishing hole, or you may be able to eat slightly less, but don't worry. This difference likely isn't because anything changed with the water or the fish. The amount of chemicals in fish generally change very slowly.
- However, science is always changing. The science behind the old *Michigan Fish Advisory* was almost 20 years old. The old guidelines were still protective of your health, but MDCH is now using the best available science to develop these guidelines. Our methods are now more similar to other states in the Great Lakes region and the EPA, too.

### It's easy to use.

- No longer do you have to match triangles, circles, upside down triangles, and diamonds to a key at the top - the guidelines are up front and easy to understand.
- Plus, for the most part, the entire family can now eat the same kind of fish - just different portion sizes - making meal times easier. No more separate guidelines for men, women, and kids!

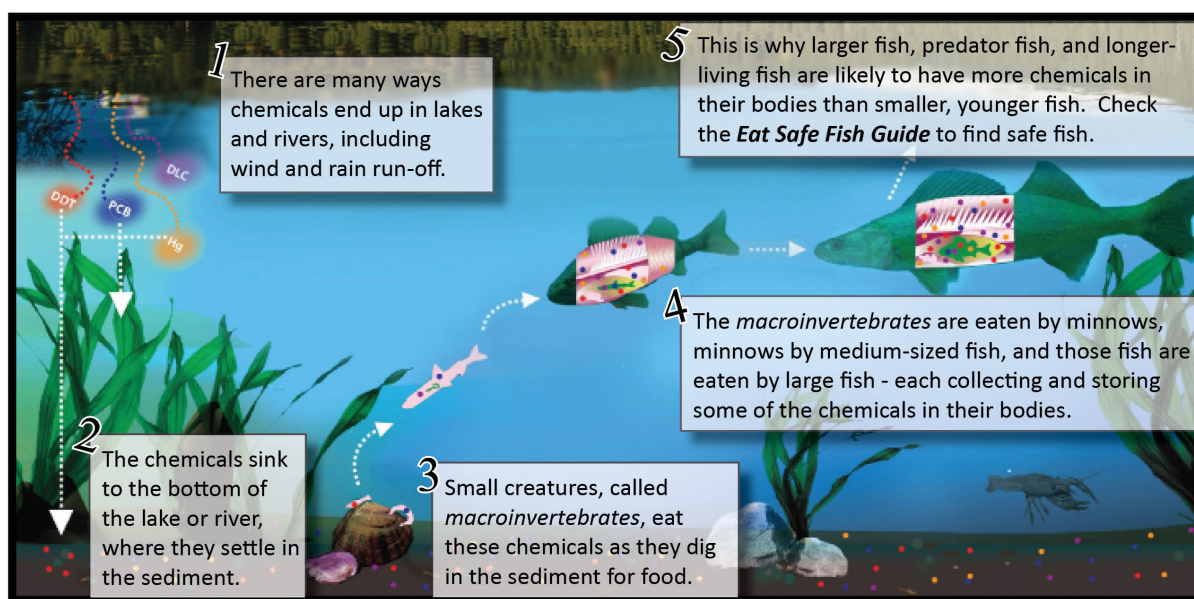
## The *Eat Safe Fish Guides* are important for everyone's health.

- A lot of attention is focused on children and pregnant women's safety when it comes to eating fish. However, new studies have shown that eating even small amounts of mercury found in some fish can change the way your heart works - regardless of who you are. Anyone with a heart is at risk from mercury!
- There are a lot of health benefits to eating fish, but knowing that chemicals may be in your fish, and how to choose the best fish to eat is important for everyone. Using the *ESF Guides* will help you find safer fish for you and your family!

## How do chemicals end up in our fish?

The chemicals in fish are both *bioaccumulative* - meaning they build up in living creatures - and *persistent* - meaning they stick around for a very long time. The picture below shows how chemicals in our environment end up in fish.

The levels of some chemicals in fish are going down thanks to stronger environmental regulations that keep them out of our lakes and rivers. But other chemicals, like mercury, are not going down, and in some waters, they're even increasing because of coal-burning power plants and weak industry regulations worldwide.



## Traveling in the Great Lakes region?

Michigan is not the only state that issues fish consumption guidelines. All of the Great Lakes states and Ontario, Canada provide information about chemicals in fish and how to choose safer fish to eat from local waters. Many other states throughout the United States do so as well. Visit [www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish) and click on "Find Your Area" to get quick links to other states' fish consumption guidelines!

## Questions?

Please call us at 1-800-648-6942 or visit [www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish) to learn more about eating safer fish and to download the *ESF Guides* for other regions.

