

Making the MDHHS Eat Safe Fish Guide

MDHHS usually releases the annual update to the *Eat Safe Fish Guide* in the early summer, but did you know our scientists are working year-round to make sure the information is as up-to-date as possible?



1 During the spring and summer, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) or Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) collects fish as part of their annual survey of various lakes and rivers around Michigan.

Each year, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) requests certain kinds of fish from a variety of Michigan lakes and rivers. The fish from each lake and river are grouped by size and species.

MDHHS will often request carp. While carp are not typically the most popular fish to eat, they do tend to have a lot of chemicals in their bodies because of what THEY eat. The results of the carp tests let MDHHS know if other fish from that lake or river should be tested, too.

2 During the summer and fall, the fish are measured, weighed, and fileted by the MDEQ.

If the skin is typically removed before eating, MDEQ will remove the skin. If it isn't, they'll leave it on.

The prepared filets are then sent to the MDHHS Laboratory for analysis.

Freezing and storing the fish does not affect the chemicals in the fish.





Spec. No.	Species	Weight	Date	Remarks
2011001-001	Mercury & Organics	0.74	F	Lake St.
2011001-002	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-003	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-004	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-005	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-006	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-007	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-008	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-009	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-010	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-011	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-012	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-013	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-014	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-015	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-016	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-017	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-018	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-019	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-020	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-021	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-022	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-023	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-024	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-025	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-026	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-027	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-028	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-029	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.
2011001-030	Mercury & Organics	1.02	F	Lake St.

3 During the winter, each individual fish filet is tested for chemicals.

The most common chemicals looked for in Michigan fish are mercury, dioxins, and PCBs. But depending on where the fish is from, and what might be found in the area, MDHHS will look for other chemicals, too.



4 In the spring, MDEQ aquatic biologists and MDHHS toxicologists review the test results and update the *Eat Safe Fish Guide* with the new information.

Since MDHHS can't test every kind of fish from every lake and river in the state every year, the guidelines for your favorite fishing hole won't necessarily change in every *Eat Safe Fish Guide*.

Most of the chemicals that MDHHS worries about are *persistent* and *bioaccumulative*. These kinds of chemicals stay in the environment for a while. Changes happen very slowly over time.

Even if the data are a few years old, the *Eat Safe Fish Guide* can still help you choose safer fish for you and your family to eat.

You can get the newest version of the *Eat Safe Fish Guide* online 24/7 at www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish (click on the *Going Fishing* button). Or, if you prefer, you can call and request a free print copy from MDHHS at 1-800-648-6942.

