



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2008

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State of Michigan Extends Advisories For Consuming Wild Game from the Tittabawassee and Saginaw River Floodplains

Three state agencies recently announced their response and concerns regarding Dow Chemical Company study reports on wild game. In 2004, Dow evaluated concentrations of dioxins in wild game living in the Tittabawassee River floodplain downstream from the city of Midland. In 2007, Dow conducted additional studies in the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River floodplains.

The Michigan Departments of Community Health, Environmental Quality and Natural Resources said today samples of wild game taken from the floodplains in 2007 confirm high levels of dioxin and dioxin like compounds in muscle meats, skin and other consumable portions of animals. High levels of dioxins previously found in game taken along the Tittabawassee River had prompted a 2004 Health Advisory for whitetail deer, turkey, and squirrel.

State of Michigan health assessors have reviewed the 2007 wild game data for the floodplains of the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers downstream of Midland. The results conclude that eating deer, turkey, squirrel, wood duck or Canada goose that contain dioxin at the levels found in the Dow wild game studies could result in adverse health effects. Eating cottontail rabbit is not likely to result in adverse health effects.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is advising that hunters and their families follow these recommendations:

- **Do not eat the liver from deer harvested in or near the Tittabawassee River floodplain downstream of Midland.** Eating liver taken from deer harvested in the flood plain of the Saginaw River is not likely to result in adverse health effects.
- **Limit consumption of muscle meat from deer harvested in or near the floodplain of the Tittabawassee River downstream of Midland and in or near the floodplain of the Saginaw River.** Women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 should eat only one meal of deer muscle meat harvested in the floodplains per week. Trimming any visible fat will lower the level of dioxins in the cooked meat.

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- **Do not eat turkey harvested in or near the floodplain of the Tittabawassee River downstream of Midland.** While MDCH advises that you not eat turkey taken from this area, at a minimum the skin, liver and gizzard should be removed and discarded.
- **Limit consumption of squirrel harvested in or near the floodplain of the Tittabawassee River downstream of Midland.** Women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 should eat only one meal of squirrel from this area per week.
- **Do not eat the skin of Canada goose or wood duck harvested in or near the floodplain of the Tittabawassee River downstream of Midland and in or near the floodplain of the Saginaw River.** MDCH recommends that you remove the skin of waterfowl before cooking and discard the liver and other internal organs.

Other wild game that have not been tested may also contain dioxins at levels that are a concern. MDCH recommends that you follow this general advice on wild game to reduce potential dioxin exposure:

- Trim any visible fat from the meat before cooking.
- Do not consume organ meats, such as the liver or brains.
- Do not eat the skin.

As a reminder, Fish Consumption Advisories remain in effect for sport caught fish from the Tittabawassee River south of Midland, the Saginaw River, and the Saginaw Bay based on levels of dioxin and polychlorinated biphenyls. The Fish Consumption Advisory is available on the front page of the Department of Community Health's web site (see address below).

If you eat several different kinds of wild game as well as fish from the areas covered by the Wild Game and Fish Consumption Advisories, MDCH recommends that you eat these foods less often than suggested here to reduce your exposure to dioxin.

Additional information regarding wild game advisories for the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River floodplains, including a map of the area covered by these advisories, may be found at www.michigan.gov/deq and www.michigan.gov/mdch.

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