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DPH RELEASES ANNUAL FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY
KEY UPDATES INCLUDE THREE RIVERS IN THE WILLIMANTIC AND MANSFIELD AREAS
AND THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

Hartford - The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the release of an updated [If I Catch It, Can I Eat It? A Guide to Safe Eating of Fish Caught in Connecticut](https://portal.ct.gov/fish), found at <https://portal.ct.gov/fish>. DPH has updated the guide in response to new sampling data that indicate higher levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in bass from three rivers in the Willimantic and Mansfield areas. In addition, the guide has updated advice in response to a decrease in polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels in carp from the Connecticut River.

“The purpose of this DPH guide is to give advice on how to safely eat fish caught in Connecticut,” stated Acting DPH Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH. *“Fish are a good source of protein and omega 3 fatty acids, a nutrient thought to be protective against heart disease and beneficial to the developing fetus. As a result, DPH recommends that the public continue to eat fish. However, certain guidelines should be followed in order to eat fish safely.”*

DPH’s updated advisories are as follows:

Three rivers in the Willimantic and Mansfield areas: (Natchaug, Shetucket and Willimantic)

The Natchaug River: from the dam at the Willimantic Reservoir (Northern Boundary) downstream to where it forms the Shetucket River. The advisory extends about a half mile down the Shetucket River to Plains Road. The Willimantic River: where it meets the Shetucket and Natchaug Rivers upstream to the dam at Pine Street. Signs will be posted in these areas in the near future.

DPH advises not to eat more than one meal per month of bass taken from these waterbodies. This advisory was developed to protect the public from elevated levels of PFAS in bass from

these waterbodies. Fish in the Natchaug River were tested when PFAS contamination was discovered in groundwater and one drinking water well near the Eastern Connecticut Fire School.

The Connecticut River:

DPH is pleased to report that PCB levels in Common Carp declined such that a consumption advisory for carp is no longer necessary for the Connecticut River. It is important to note that there is still a consumption advisory for catfish in the Connecticut River due to elevated levels of PCBs in this fish species. DPH advises that high risk populations (pregnant women, women planning on becoming pregnant within a year, women that are nursing, and children under 6 years old) consume only one meal per month of catfish from the Connecticut River while the general population can consume up to one meal per week of catfish from the same waterbody.

Within the updated guide are other pre-existing statewide advisories worth noting:

Freshwater fish: The advice for freshwater fish caught in Connecticut for pregnant women and children (high risk groups) is to eat no more than one meal per month. For all other groups, the advice is to eat no more than one meal per week of freshwater fish. This statewide advice is due to mercury contamination found in Connecticut freshwater fish. This statewide advisory does not apply to sunfish or trout as there are no consumption limits for these fish species.

Long Island Sound: There are guidelines for high risk groups as well as the general population that recommends limiting or avoiding Striped Bass and Bluefish caught in Long Island Sound due to PCB contamination. People in the high risk group should not consume Bluefish (over 25 inches long) and all Striped Bass and the general population should not eat more than 1 fish meal per month of these fish species. For Bluefish 13-25 inches long and all Weakfish caught in Long Island Sound, DPH advises that all groups should not eat more than 1 fish meal per month.

The *If I Catch It, Can I Eat It?* Guide has a listing of the waterbodies and species in Connecticut with specific consumption recommendations. For more information visit <https://portal.ct.gov/fish> or contact call DPH's Environmental Health Program at 860.509.7293.

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