

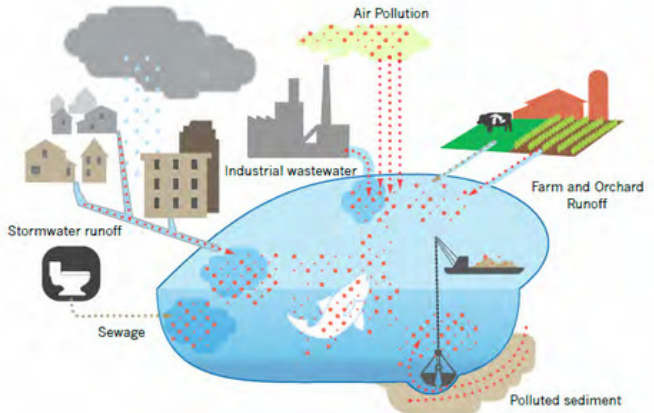


**EAT LOCALLY CAUGHT FISH
IN A HEALTHY WAY!**

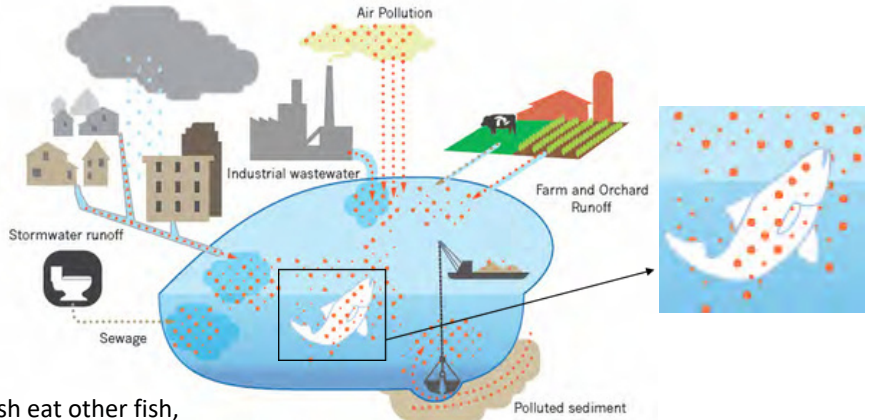
Western New York has some of the best freshwater fishing in the world. Fishing is fun and an affordable way to feed your family.

Fish can be a very healthy meal for you and your family. However, some fish may be harmful to eat. Learn how to identify the fish you catch and make your fish meals healthier to eat.

Western New York has a long history of pollution. This region's abundant supply of water made it a center of transportation, farming and industry for more than 100 years. Today, many fish caught from rivers and lakes in Western New York are polluted with harmful chemicals. These chemicals come from many sources.



When fish live and eat in polluted water, chemicals in the water can pass to the fish and build up over time. The longer a fish lives and eats in polluted water, the more polluted it tends to be.



When fish eat other fish, chemicals can pass from the smaller fish to the larger fish. Smaller, younger fish tend to be less polluted than larger, older fish of the same species.

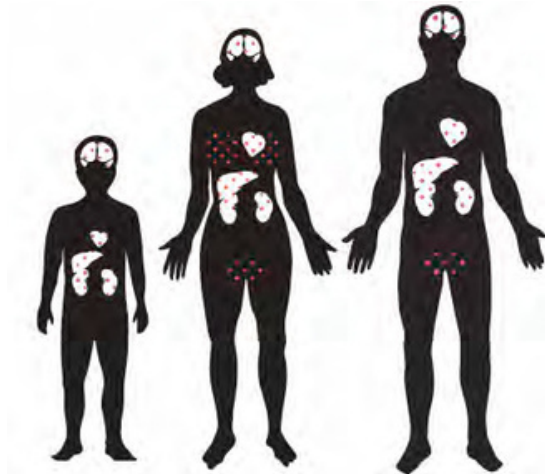


The dangerous chemicals in fish can pass to our bodies when we eat them. You cannot tell if a fish is polluted with harmful chemicals when you look at it. **You cannot see, taste or smell these dangerous chemicals in fish.**



Eating a lot of polluted fish can be bad for your health.

When we eat polluted fish, the pollution in fish bodies can pass to our bodies. The more polluted fish we eat, the more pollution we put into our bodies. The more pollution we put in our bodies, the greater the risk to our health.



Not everyone will get sick from eating polluted fish. How pollution affects your body can depend on your lifestyle, weight, age, sex, and overall health. These dangerous chemicals can build up in your body over time and last for years.

Everyone is at risk from eating polluted fish, but some people are more at risk than others.

Women and children should be the most careful when eating fish caught from rivers and lakes in Western New York because of pollution.

Babies and Children under 15

Parents need to be careful about which fish they feed their children. The brains and bodies of children under 15 are very sensitive to pollution because they are still growing.

If children eat a lot of polluted fish, harmful chemicals can build up in their bodies and affect how their brains grow and work. They may have problems with memory, attention, motor skills, and language development. These chemicals may also affect a child's ability to fight infection and disease.



Pregnant Women

The time a baby spends inside of its mother is very important for its health. If a woman eats a lot of polluted fish before or during pregnancy, she may pass harmful chemicals that have built up in her body to her baby. Babies are very sensitive during this time and these chemicals may affect how their brains and bodies grow and work in the future. Harmful chemicals may also affect a woman's pregnancy by causing the baby to be born too early and have a lower birth weight.



Breastfeeding babies and their mothers

If a woman eats a lot of polluted fish before or while breastfeeding, she may pass harmful chemicals that have built up in her body to her baby through her breast milk. Even if you have eaten polluted fish in the past, **DO NOT STOP** breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is very important and healthy for babies! Store bought formula does not have the same health benefits to a growing baby as breast milk.

Women who may become pregnant in the future

Women who plan to or may become pregnant in the future should also be careful about which fish they eat. If a woman eats a lot of polluted fish before she becomes pregnant, bad chemicals from these past meals may still be in her body. These chemicals may be passed to her baby if she becomes pregnant in the future. Some chemicals can stay in your body for many years.



People with lower risk from pollution

Men over 15 and women who will not become pregnant in the future have less risk to their health when eating polluted fish.

This is because these people cannot pass pollution from the fish they eat to a child like a woman can during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

However, these people should still be careful about which fish they eat. Certain chemicals in fish may affect the brain and other organs. Chemicals in fish may also affect sperm quality in men. People with serious health problems may also be more sensitive to pollution and should be careful about which fish they eat.



Don't stop eating ALL fish!

Protect your health by making smart choices about the locally caught fish you eat. Follow the tips below to make your fish meals healthier and less polluted.



Make better choices!

Do not fish near pipes where sewage may enter the water. Eat smaller, younger fish within a species because they tend to build up fewer, dangerous chemicals. Eat fish from waterways without **Specific Fish Advisories**.



Clean your fish!

Clean fish to control bacteria and remove up to half of some chemicals from your meal.



Cook your fish!

Cook fish to kill bacteria and in ways that let fat drip away from your meal.





Plan your fish meals!


Eat the right size fish meal, and space out your meals to help protect your health.

Make Better Choices!

Eat fish from less polluted waterways, such as Lake Erie. Eat smaller, younger fish. Larger, older fish have had more time to build up pollution in their bodies than smaller, younger fish of the same species.

Fish with a  are better choices, because they tend to build up fewer chemicals in their bodies than other fish.

Fish with a  OK choices, but tend to build up more chemicals in their bodies than fish with a green check.

Fish with a  are bad choices, because they tend to build up the most chemicals in their bodies. Avoid or eat less of these fish to help protect your health.



Better Choices



OK Choices



Bad Choices



Emerald Shiner/Minnow



Yellow Perch



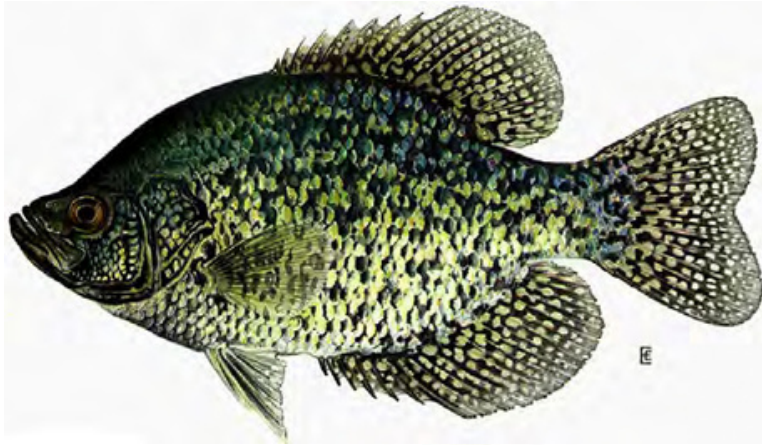
Less than 10"



Greater than 10"



Black Crappie



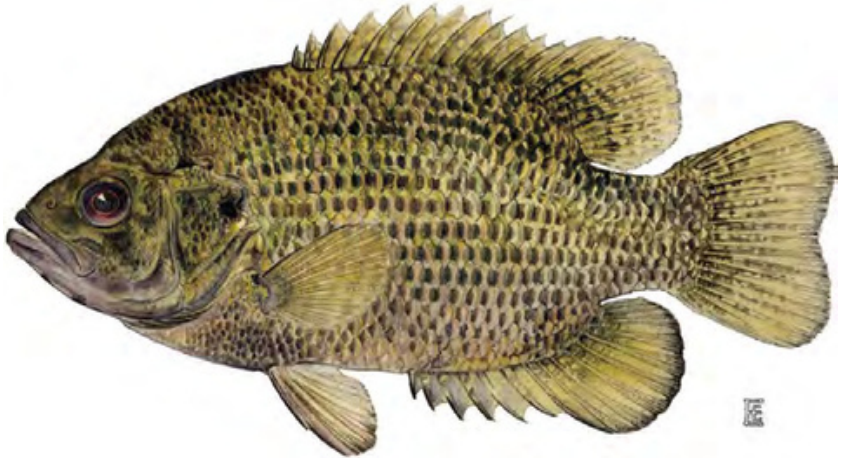
Pumpkinseed



Bluegill



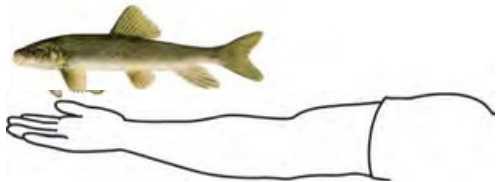
Rockbass



Smelt



Sucker



Sheepshead



Smallmouth Bass



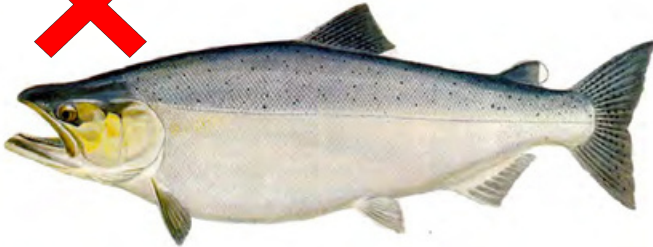
Largemouth Bass



Walleye



Chinook Salmon



Coho Salmon





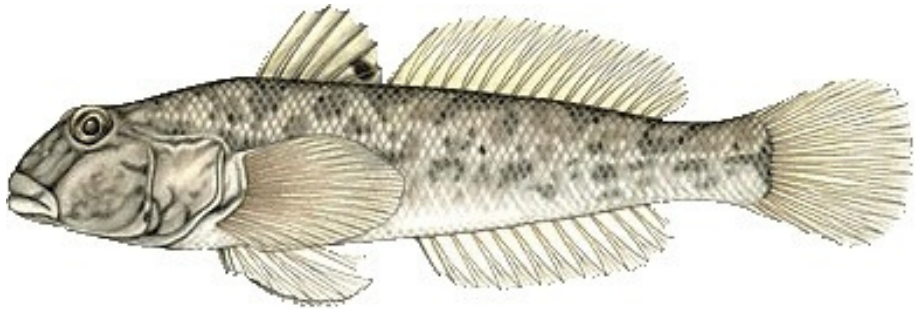
Brown Bullhead



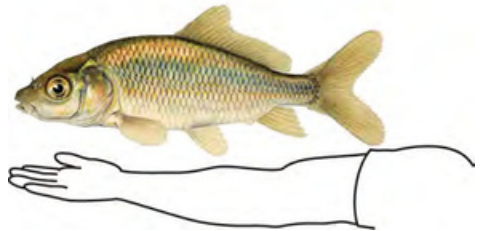
Channel Catfish



Goby



Carp





Lake Trout



Rainbow Trout



Clean your fish!



Most harmful chemicals are in the fatty parts of the fish, such as the head, organs, skin and lateral lines (dark fat along the sides of the fish). Remove up to half of some chemicals from your meal by cutting off and throwing away all the fatty parts before cooking and eating.



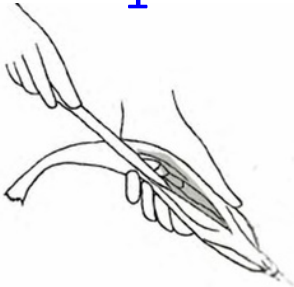
The skinless fillet has the least amount of dangerous chemicals in it.



Do not use or eat fatty parts of the fish because they can contain many chemicals.



1



Gut your fish by cutting along the bottom of the fish. Be careful not to puncture the guts!

2



Pull out the guts and rinse the fish. Throw the guts away.

3



Make a cut behind the head and gills on one side of the fish.



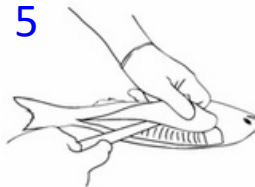
Run the knife down the backbone of the fish, below the fins to the tail.

4



Slice off the fillet by guiding the knife down and across the bones. Flip the fish over and repeat. You now have two fillets!

5



6



7



Place the fish on a cutting board skin side down. Holding the skin at the tail, work the knife along the fillet until you have removed the skin.

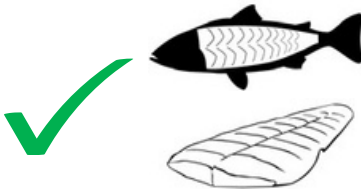


Eat only the fillet of fish!

Cook your fish!



Cook and eat only the skinless fillet. The skinless fillet has the least chemicals. Cook fish on a rack or in ways that allow the fat to drip off, like baking, grilling, broiling and steaming. Do not eat or use cooking liquids and fats to make soups or sauces. They can contain many chemicals.



Eat only the fillet of fish!



Plan your fish meals!

For most adults, eat **no more than a 4 meals of locally caught fish a month**. One meal is equal to 1/2 of a pound or 8 ounces. Children should eat smaller fish meals than adults.



Adults



A half pound, uncooked fish fillet is about the size and thickness of two decks of cards, or an adult hand. Adults may choose to eat smaller fish meals, like two 4-ounce servings per week, or eat all 8 ounces in one meal.



Children

A meal is up to a quarter of a pound of fish, or 4 ounces. A 4-ounce, uncooked fish fillet is about the size and thickness of one deck of cards, or an adult hand without the fingers.

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Written by: Katy Brown and Sarah Cunningham

Graphic Design by: Joel Brenden

Fish Images by: Ellen Edmonson and Hugh Crisp

If you have any questions, check local fish advisories by going online at www.health.ny.gov/fish or talk to your doctor.

To view this book online go to <https://bnwaterkeeper.org/our-impact/fish-consumption-info/> or scan the QR code.



Share this book with family, friends
and anyone you know who fishes
or eats locally caught fish.



Remember, always check health advisories before you eat locally caught fish!
These advisories provide more specific information about eating fish from local waterways. To view health advisories, go online to www.health.ny.gov/fish or call toll-free **1 (800) 458-1158** for more information.