



# What women of childbearing age should know about eating fish.

**Fish are fun to catch and good to eat. Fish are healthy food – high in protein and low in fat.**

But too much of a good thing can be bad for you. All fish contain some mercury, a contaminant. Eating too much mercury-contaminated fish can be harmful to your health and to your child's health. Chemicals found in fish are not known to cause immediate sickness, but chemicals can build up in the body over time.

Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain that is just starting to form and grow. That's why young children, babies in the womb and breast-fed babies are at most risk. Too much mercury may affect a child's behavior and lead to learning problems later in life.

**How can I reduce my health risks and my child's health risks from mercury and other chemicals in fish?**

- **Eat smaller, younger fish.**
- **Choose lean fish. These include panfish, such as bluegill, crappie, sunfish, and yellow perch.**
- **Choose fish that don't eat other fish. The large predator fish such as bass, walleye, northern pike, and muskie tend to have more chemicals.**

For more information about eating Wisconsin fish or to obtain a copy of the sport fish advisory, call the State Division of Public Health at 608-261-6875, call your local health department, or check out the Division's website at [www.dhfs.state.wi.us](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us) or the Department of Natural Resources website at [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us).