

What are 'safe' fish?

Safe fish are fish that are low in chemicals. If you use the **Eat Safe Fish Guide** when you choose fish to catch and eat, you will protect yourself and your family from chemicals that could someday make you sick.

If there are chemicals in the fish, why should I still eat it?

Fish have a lot of great health benefits.

- ✓ Fish can be a great low-fat source of protein.
- ✓ Fish are brain food.
- ✓ Some fish have heart-healthy omega-3s.



Plus, fishing is a fun way to get outside and enjoy Michigan's 11,000 lakes, rivers, and streams!

If you **follow the 3Cs** and go after fish that have **fewer chemicals** in them, you'll get a lot of health benefits and have **very little risk**.

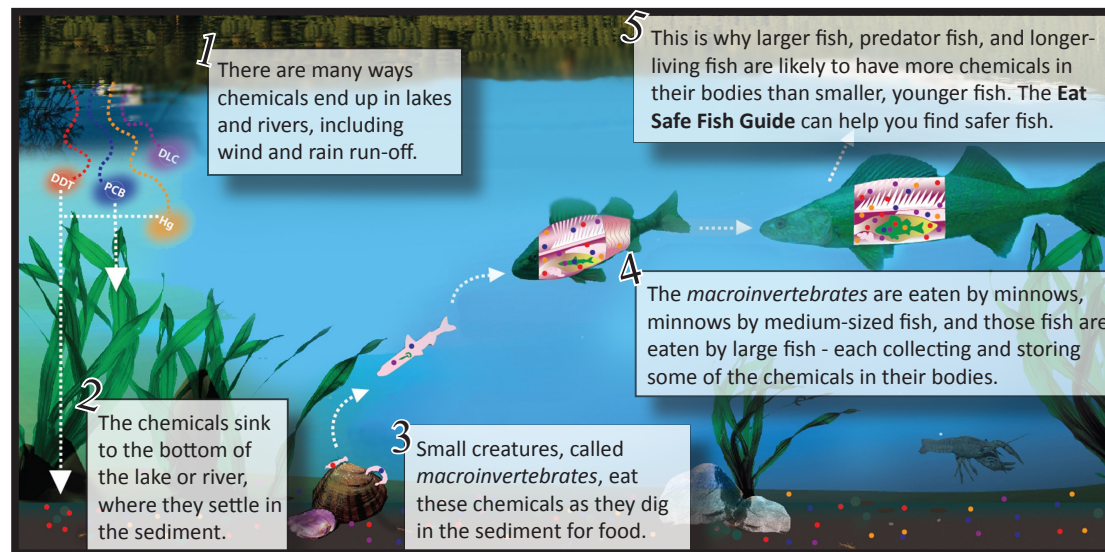
Catching fish • Buying fish • Eating fish

For more information on safe fish, call MDCH at 1-800-648-6942 or visit us online at www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish.



with support from
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Why are there chemicals in some fish?



- ✓ PCBs, dioxins, and mercury are the most common chemicals found in filets of Michigan fish.
- ✓ These chemicals are *persistent* and *bioaccumulative*. This means the chemicals not only stay in the environment, they also build up in living things.
- ✓ Because of this, they have become part of the food chain for fish, as you can see in the picture above.
- ✓ Some chemicals, like PCBs and dioxins, build up in the fat of the fish. Mercury builds up in the muscle, or filet, of the fish.
- ✓ If you choose fish lower in mercury and follow the **3Cs**, you can keep chemicals from building up in your body, too.
- ✓ You can't see or taste these chemicals. They do not change how clear or dirty the water looks. The only way to know if these chemicals are in the fish is by testing for them in a laboratory.
- ✓ The **Eat Safe Fish Guide** can help you find fish species that have been tested for chemicals by the MDCH Lab. The **Guide** can help you and your family choose fish that are safer to eat.



To get the **Eat Safe Fish Guide** for **your region** or to learn more about catching or buying safe fish, call MDCH at 1-800-648-6942 or visit us online at www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish.

eat safe fish in Michigan

Learn about eating safe, local, and healthful fish from our Great Lakes State.

www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish



Get to know the 3Cs

Choose, Clean, Cook

By choosing the right fish and then cleaning and cooking it the right way, you can reduce some of the chemicals in the fish **by nearly half!**

1 Choose

This quiz will help you find the best way for you to choose your fish.
Read each sentence and mark 'T' for true or 'F' for false.

- ☐ T ☐ F I only eat fish caught in Michigan a few times each year.
- ☐ T ☐ F I'm 15 years old or older.
- ☐ T ☐ F I DON'T plan on having children in the next several years.
- ☐ T ☐ F I DON'T have health problems, like cancer or diabetes.
- ☐ T ☐ F I DON'T eat fish from a lake or river that has posted signs with "Do Not Eat" guidelines from MDCH.

If **ALL** are **TRUE** for you:

You're at lower risk from chemicals in fish.
The S.A.F.E. tips will help you choose fish to eat once in a while without worry!

S **Smaller fish are better.**
They tend to have fewer chemicals.

a **Avoid large predator fish & bottom-feeders.**
Always check the *Eat Safe Fish Guide* before eating these fish.

f **Fat should be removed.**
Some chemicals are stored in the fat of the fish.

e **Eat fish that have been broiled or grilled on a rack.**
More fat can drip away during cooking.

If **ONE or MORE** are **FALSE**:

You might be at higher risk.
The *Eat Safe Fish Guide* will lead you to fish that are safer to eat on a regular basis.

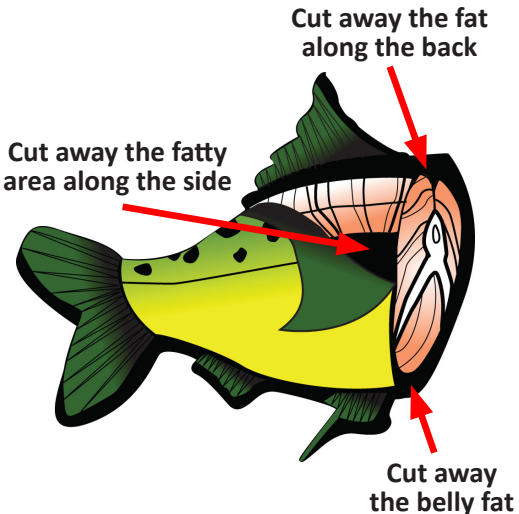
The *Eat Safe Fish Guide*:

- ☒ lists fish species that have had filets tested for chemicals by MDCH.
- ☒ protects people who eat Michigan fish often.
- ☒ protects anyone who has health problems, is young, is pregnant, or is planning on having children in the future.



Need a **Guide**? Call MDCH at 1-800-648-6942 or visit www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish.

2 Clean



Some chemicals, like PCBs and dioxins, collect in the fat of the fish.

- ☒ When cleaning the fish, trim away any of the fat you can see. Remove and throw away the organs, too.

Careful cleaning can remove a lot of the chemicals from the fish.

3 Cook

Even after trimming away the fat that you can see on the fish, some fat will still be hidden inside the fish filets.

- ☒ Poke holes in the skin or remove it completely so that fat can drip away from the fish filet as it cooks.
- ☒ Cook your fish on a grill or on a broiler pan in the oven. Any fat left can now drip away from the fish through the grates.

If you cook your fish like this, you can get rid of even more of the chemicals that can be in the filet...**except mercury**, of course!



You can't remove mercury from fish by cleaning and cooking. Always choose your fish wisely!