



# News Release

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## **DPH RELEASES ANNUAL FISH ADVISORY; INCLUDES LOWER FARMINGTON RIVER UPDATE**

HARTFORD, Conn. - The Connecticut Department of Public Health has announced the release of its updated *If I Catch It, Can I Eat It? A Guide to Safe Eating of Fish Caught in Connecticut*, which can be found at: <https://portal.ct.gov/fish>.

While fishing is a great way to spend time outdoors in Connecticut and there are some beautiful fishing areas in the state, DPH would like to remind everyone that there are consumption advisories on some waterbodies due to contaminants in fish.

One of the new updates is that DPH removed the lower Farmington River advisory in December 2020 and that decision is reflected in the 2021 guide. The removal of the advisory is in response to fish data that indicated that per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) levels in the lower Farmington River are no longer elevated enough to justify a specific fish consumption advisory.

DPH also wants to remind the public about the addition last summer of the advisory of “one meal per month” for bass caught in the Natchaug, Willimantic, and the Shetucket Rivers in the towns of Willimantic and Mansfield due to elevated levels of PFAS. Specifically, the advisory is in place in the Natchaug River from the dam at the Willimantic Reservoir (northern boundary) downstream to where it forms the Shetucket River. The advisory extends a half mile down the Shetucket River to Plains Road and the Willimantic River from where it meets the Shetucket and Natchaug Rivers upstream to the dam at Pine Street.

The guide is available at all tackle shops, local health departments, and town clerk offices. The guide also emphasizes store bought fish with a list of “good fish to eat and fish to limit or avoid.” The updated 2021 guide also will be available online in Spanish this summer. Until then, the 2019 Spanish version is available at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/fish> .

(more)

The standard advice for fish caught in Connecticut for pregnant women and children (high risk groups) is to eat no more than one meal per month of freshwater fish caught in Connecticut. For all other groups, the advice is to eat no more than one meal per week of freshwater fish. Sunfish and stocked trout are not included in this advisory.

This standard advice is due to mercury contamination found in Connecticut freshwater fish. In addition, there is a guideline that recommends limiting or avoiding striped bass and bluefish caught in Long Island Sound due to Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) contamination. For other areas of the state, the advisory guide has a listing of the water bodies and species in Connecticut with specific consumption recommendations.

“The purpose of this DPH guide is to give advice on how to safely eat fish caught in Connecticut,” said 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 of 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 to eat fish safely.”

Additional information on DPH fish consumption advisories, including *A Woman’s Guide to Eating Fish Safely-Information for Pregnant Women* (available both in English and Spanish) can be found at: <https://portal.ct.gov/fish> or by calling a staff person at 1-877-458-FISH (3474).