

# What you should know about Eating fish from Hanford Reach



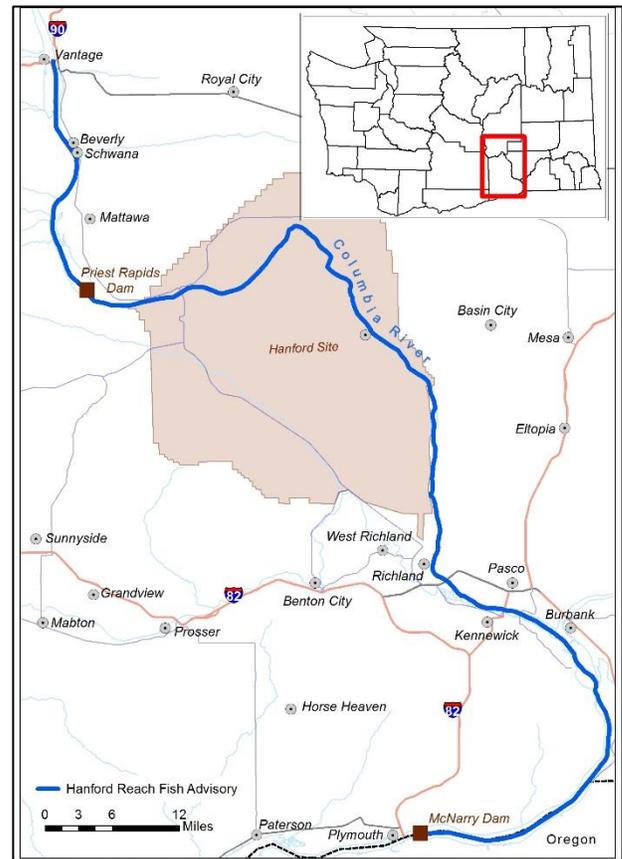
Chemical contaminants, like mercury and PCBs, have been found throughout the Columbia River basin. These chemicals accumulate in fish. You may ingest these chemicals when you eat fish from the river. There are actions you can take to reduce your exposure to chemical contaminants in fish.

This advice applies to Hanford Reach, or the 150-mile stretch of the Columbia River extending from the McNary Dam (Lake Wallula) upriver to the I-90 bridge near Vantage, Washington.

## Advice for eating fish from Hanford Reach

Washington State Department of Health and the American Heart Association encourage all Washingtonians to eat at least two seafood meals per week as part of a heart healthy diet.

- **Fish is nutritious.** Seafood is low in saturated fat, and a good source of protein, vitamins, minerals, and Omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Fish is good for your heart.** Omega-3 fatty acids help prevent heart disease and stroke by reducing blood pressure, inflammation, and blood clotting.
- **Fish is brain food.** Omega-3 fatty acids may relieve depression and decrease the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. They also help with healthy brain development in infants and children.



*Hanford Reach segment of the Columbia River to reduce your exposure to chemical contaminants.*

We recommend that you eat fish, choose wisely- it is best to eat fish from a variety of sources and choose fish low in contaminants.

### If you eat fish from Hanford Reach, follow these guidelines:

Healthy Choice	Limit 4 meals* per month	Limit 2 meals per month	Limit 1 meal per month	DO NOT EAT
Lamprey Salmon Shad Steelhead	Smallmouth bass	Bridgelip sucker Largemouth bass Walleye	Carp Mountain whitefish White sturgeon	Northern pikeminnow

\*A meal is 8 oz. of uncooked fish for an adult (about the size and thickness of your hand).

## Health concerns

We evaluated how eating fish from Hanford Reach may impact your health. We looked at mercury and PCBs in six resident fish species. These chemicals may build up in your body, and impact your long-term health. Women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers, children, people that eat more fish than the general population, and people that rely on fish as their primary source of protein are at greatest risk for health impacts from mercury and PCBs.

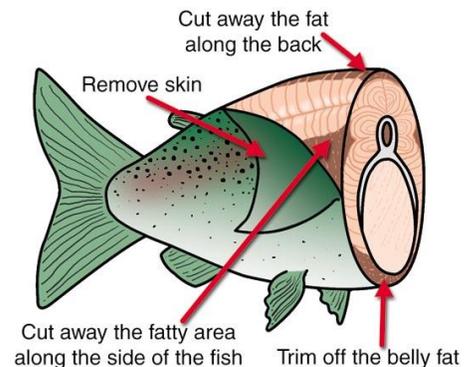
- **Mercury** is found naturally in rocks and soil, and can be released from industrial and mining activities or through improper disposal of products like thermostats and florescent bulbs. Mercury can harm the brain, kidneys, and heart. Infants and children are more sensitive to mercury than adults. Exposure to mercury may cause lifelong learning or behavioral problems in children.
- **PCBs** are man-made chemicals used in coolants and lubricants. They were banned in 1977, but stay in the environment for a long time. PCBs can cause learning and behavioral problems and may impact your immune and reproductive systems. Exposure to PCBs may also cause cancer.

In addition, Washington State Department of Ecology evaluated fish in the Columbia River for radiation, and did not identify any health concerns.

## How can I reduce my exposure to contaminants in fish?

Before you fish, check for advisories at [www.doh.wa.gov/fish](http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish) and follow the advice for eating fish from a specific waterbody. If there is no advisory, Department of Health recommends eating up to 4 fish meals per month. A meal is 8 ounces (oz.) of uncooked fish for an adult (about the size and thickness of your hand). Here are some general tips:

- Eat a variety of fish from a variety of sources.
- Eat younger and smaller fish (within legal limits).
- Remove skin, organs, and fat before cooking.



## Will the advice for Hanford Reach change?

Often, advice about eating fish from a specific waterbody will be in place for a long time. We may change this advice if new data shows that fish are safe to eat.

## About fish advisories

Washington State Department of Health issues advice about eating fish from a specific waterbody when chemicals found in certain fish species may harm your health. We look at data collected by other agencies, like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington State Department of Ecology, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine whether contaminants found in fish are harmful to your health. We make recommendations about how to protect your health based on this information.

Before you fish, check for advisories at [www.doh.wa.gov/fish](http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish)

Or call Washington State Department of Health at 1-877-485-7316.