For More Information...

GA Division of Public Health
Chemical Hazards Program
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards
Phone: (404) 657-6534

GA Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division
www.gadnr.org
Phone: (706) 369-6376 or (404) 656-4713

The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
www.gafamilies.com
Phone: (706) 542-8866

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J. Scott Angle, Dean and Director

To receive a copy of the complete ***Guidelines for Eating Fish from Georgia Waters***, contact GA EPD or visit:
www.gadnr.org

DPH03-095HW

A Woman's Guide to Eating Fish and Seafood From Middle and South Georgia

What you should know if you are pregnant, planning to be pregnant, or nursing a child

DHR
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension
College of Family and Consumer Sciences

Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division

Middle and South Georgia Fish Consumption Guidelines for Nursing and Pregnant Women, and Children

How to Read this Map

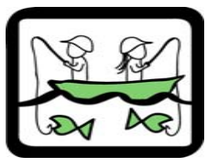
Fish caught in some counties should be eaten no more than once each week. In other counties, fish should not be eaten more than once a month. Look at the map above to see the guideline in your area.

Remember--

Different types of fish have different amounts of mercury. For example, bream, panfish, crappie, and catfish often have lower concentrations of mercury and can be eaten more often than larger sport fish.

The Benefits of Eating Fish and Seafood

Fish and seafood are excellent sources of protein, minerals, and vitamins, and play a role in maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet. Fish is also an excellent source of Omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for the development of a healthy baby. According to the American Heart Association, Omega-3 fatty acids in fish and seafood are also essential for good cardiovascular health for adults.



Concerns About Eating Fish and Seafood

Some fish contain contaminants, such as mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene-like chemicals that can be harmful if you eat them too often.

Over time, your body may build up harmful levels of toxic chemicals that can affect your pregnancy and the health of your baby.

Contaminated fish may not look, smell, or taste different, but they can still harm you and your child. Women who are or may become pregnant should contact their local health department or the Georgia Environmental Protection Division for more detailed information.

Frequently Asked Questions about Eating Fish and Seafood in Middle and South Georgia

Q. Are fish and seafood from Middle and South Georgia safe to eat?

A. Yes, in most instances. However, some types of fish and seafood may contain contaminants that are a concern for pregnant women and young children. Women who are pregnant or nursing, or may become pregnant, and children under seven should follow the general recommendations on the map and choose fish that are likely to contain minimal amounts of contaminants.

Q. Which types of fish are most likely to have high levels of contaminants and which types are likely to have low levels?

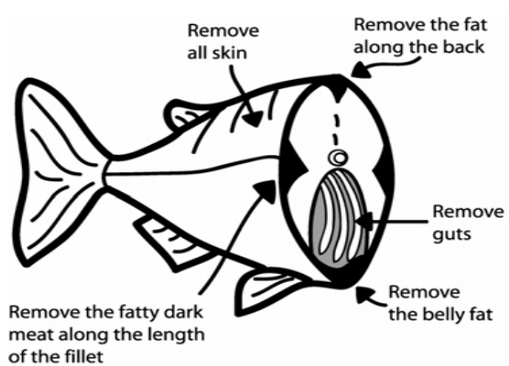
A. The following chart lists species that typically contain higher levels of mercury and species that typically contain lower levels. Also, keep in mind that larger fish usually have higher contaminant levels than smaller fish. For example, a 12" largemouth bass will usually be much safer to eat than a 16" largemouth bass from the same body of water.

Higher Risk Species	Lower Risk Species
Largemouth Bass	Bream
Hybrid Bass	Sunfish
Striped Bass	Crappie
White Bass	Panfish
Pickerel	Bullheads
Bowfin	Channel Catfish
Gar	Suckers
Flathead Catfish	

Q. What can I do to protect myself and my child from chemicals found in fish?

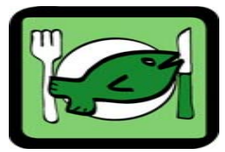
A. Follow the suggestions below:

- Eat safer <u>types</u> of fish and seafood
  - Eat a variety of fish and seafood
  - Avoid eating fish and seafood known to have high levels of contamination
- Find safer ways to <u>prepare</u> fish and seafood
  - Before cooking, remove organs, skin and fat as shown in the diagram below
  - Cook the fish in a way that the fat can drip away from the fish, such as grilling
  - Avoid deep frying fish and seafood
- Limit <u>how much</u> fish and seafood you eat
  - Nationally, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that pregnant women should eat only a couple of servings of fish and seafood each week
  - Follow the guidelines in this brochure when eating locally caught fish in your area



What About Store Bought Fish?

Fish and seafood can contain trace amounts of contaminants; fish sold in stores and restaurants are no exception. However, smaller, non-predatory fish generally contain less mercury.



Based on reports from the FDA, fish and seafood should be part of a balanced diet for pregnant women. However, some long-lived, large fish such as **<u>shark</u>**, **<u>swordfish</u>**, **<u>king mackerel</u>**, **and <u>tilefish</u>** may contain high mercury concentrations and should not be eaten. FDA recommends eating a couple of servings of fish each week, and suggests a variety of store bought fish such as shellfish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish or farm raised fish.

Generally Safe Fish to Eat

Commercial fish and seafood such as flounder, pollock, cod, salmon, shrimp, clams, scallops, oysters, mussels, and farm raised fish, such as catfish generally are safe to eat.