

Fish Consumption Advisories

This metadata page provides a brief summary of this dataset. More detailed data and metadata may be available from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Tracking Program. For more information, please refer to the contact information on the last page under 'Questions?'

Background

Although catching and eating fish and shellfish is an important part of the way of life for many Louisianans, there may be health risks associated with eating fish or shellfish harvested from particular waterbodies. When harmful chemicals are released into the environment, these chemicals may contaminate some lakes, rivers, streams or ponds. Over time, these contaminants accumulate in the bodies of the fish or shellfish that live there. When these contaminated fish or shellfish are caught and consumed, the contaminants may get into the body of the person that consumed them, which may pose a threat to human health. Fish consumption advisories are issued when contaminants are found at levels that may potentially impact the public's health. LDH fish advisories focus on two groups, women of childbearing age and children under seven, which are the most vulnerable population to exposure to contaminants; and adults and children over the age of seven.

Data Sources

- [LDH Health/Fish Consumption Advisories Program](#)

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Environmental Public Health Tracking Program receives fish advisory data which shared by the Section of Environmental Epidemiology & Toxicology (SEET).

Vintage: The latest dataset available from LDH Tracking was tallied based on data updated through 2024.

Data Measure(s)

The LDH Tracking program collects data on Annual Number

- Number of Mercury in Fish Consumption Advisories by Louisiana Parish

Explore Data

The LDH Health Data Explorer (<http://ldh.la.gov/tracking>) is an online query tool which allows health, environmental hazard, exposure and population data to be explored and viewed side-by-side in tables, charts, and maps. These data can be viewed, printed and downloaded for further analysis.

To *Explore Data* on the query tool:

Step 1: Select Criteria

Category: **Environmental Quality**

Topic: **Advisories**

Focus: **Mercury in Fish Consumption Advisories**

Fish Advisories and your Health

Louisiana fish consumption advisories are developed using a risk-based public health assessment method which establishes consumption levels designed to prevent adverse effects. In most cases, fish are sampled by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in areas of suspected chemical contamination, such as near facilities that have experienced spills or have had poor wastewater management practices in the past.

Fish Advisories and the Environment

The LDEQ is active in remediating contaminated areas and in correcting the actions that caused the contamination to occur. Due to the widespread occurrence of mercury in Louisiana and the nation, popular fishing areas and many other water bodies statewide have been sampled to determine the extent of risks due to mercury. If it is determined there is a need for a health advisory, press releases are prepared for public dissemination of the information. The [Protocol for Issuing Public Health Advisories for Chemical Contaminants in Recreationally Caught Fish and Shellfish](#) contains detailed information about how fish advisories are developed in Louisiana.

Data Methods

Mercury Fish Advisory data were updated through 2024. Parish tallies are based on the number of advisories in waterbodies that border, cross borders or exist within the parish boundary.

Data Limitations and Important Considerations

The number of fish advisories do not directly correlate to risk of exposure or direct exposure to mercury or other chemical contaminants. Biomonitoring data (blood or urine tests) would be required to determine the level of exposure to a contaminant, not solely the individual's diet. These data should be used in rankings of environmental risk factors that would be preliminary, and require further analysis.

Data Re-release

This is a public dataset which can be freely shared. Personally identifiable health information have been removed. Please refer to the Data Methods section of these metadata from more information.

Data Citations

Please cite the US CDC, LDH Environmental Public Health Tracking Program Cooperative Agreement NUE1EH001490, and any data source(s) listed on Page 1 when re-sharing or applying these data in analyses or publications.



Disclaimer

Data are intended to spur further research and should be used only as a starting point to understanding how the environment and other contributing factors may be connected to disease. Datasets presented on the LDH Health Data Explorer site are intended to answer some basic questions, but should ultimately lead to further inquiry and more detailed study.

Data limitations should be noted if conducting exploratory ecological studies with these data. Limitations may include data gaps, reporting discrepancies (for example, a disruption of reporting or instrument recording) and insufficient data on all potentially confounding factors. There are numerous additional factors which may contribute to disease onset. These include genetics, access to health care, existing health conditions, medicines, other chemical substances we come into contact with or ingest, nutrition, route and duration of exposure, level of activity, level of stress, and others.

Responsible use of this data requires exercising caution when drawing conclusions based solely on views of the limited available data. Any perceived relationship, trend, or pattern apparent in the data should not be interpreted to imply causation; may in fact be unrelated; and should be regarded as preliminary, and potentially erroneous, until more in-depth study and if applicable, statistical evaluation, can be applied.

The LDH Bureau of Health Informatics and Environmental Public Health Tracking Program cannot guarantee the completeness of the information contained in these datasets and expressly disclaim liability for errors and omissions in their content.

Additional Information

Please visit the following links for more information:

- Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries | [Fish Consumption Advisories](#)
- LDEQ - LA Fish Advisories App ([available for free download](#))
- EPA | FDA - [Advice about eating fish](#)

Questions?

- Email: healthdata@la.gov
- Website: <http://ldh.la.gov/tracking>
- Toll free Phone: 1-888-293-7020