

# **Fish Consumption Advisories**

## **About**

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 water bodies in Louisiana. When harmful chemicals are released into the environment, these chemicals may contaminate some lakes, rivers, streams or ponds. Over time, these contaminants may 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.

## **About the Measures**

These data include the number of current mercury fish consumption advisories in Louisiana, including coastal advisories for mercury and other chemical contaminants. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Health/Fish Consumption Advisories Program, in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), issues fish consumption advisories to ensure that fish and shellfish harvested in Louisiana are safe to eat. If pesticide contamination is suspected, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) is also consulted during the course of advisory development and dissemination.

## **About the Data**

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 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. 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.

## **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 this 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 following hurricanes) 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 many others.

Responsible use of this data therefore 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.

## Data Sources

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

## Additional Information

- [LDH Mercury Fish Advisories](#)

## Questions

- Email: [healthdata@la.gov](mailto:healthdata@la.gov)