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The following fish consumption advisory was issued on March 8, 2006 by the Department of Health & Hospitals, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. For more information, please contact:

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DEQ
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(225) 219-3615

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FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO OFF THE COAST OF LOUISIANA

Based on fish sampling in the Gulf of Mexico off of the coast of Louisiana, unacceptable levels of mercury have been detected in king mackerel, cobia (ling, lemonfish), blackfin tuna and greater amberjack. Elevated levels of mercury have also been found in king mackerel taken from Gulf Coast waters off of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, and in cobia, blackfin tuna and greater amberjack taken from Gulf Coast waters off of Florida. Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas have also issued fish consumption advisories for king mackerel and Florida has issued fish consumption advisories for cobia, blackfin tuna and greater amberjack. **This advisory supercedes a previous advisory issued for the Gulf of Mexico on September 4, 1997.**

The Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals (DHH), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (DWF) advise that the following precautions be taken when eating king mackerel, cobia, blackfin tuna or greater amberjack taken off the coast of Louisiana.


- **Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age SHOULD NOT CONSUME KING MACKEREL and should consume no more than ONE MEAL PER MONTH of cobia, blackfin tuna and greater amberjack combined from the advisory area (a meal is considered to be half a pound of fish for adults and children).**
- **Other adults and children seven years of age and older SHOULD NOT CONSUME KING MACKEREL GREATER THAN 39 INCHES IN TOTAL LENGTH (distance from the outermost portion of the snout to the outermost portion of the caudal fin) and should consume no more than TWO MEALS PER MONTH of king mackerel 39 inches or less in total length and no more than FOUR MEALS PER MONTH of cobia, blackfin tuna and greater amberjack combined from the advisory area (a meal is considered to be half a pound of fish for adults and children).**

- **Louisiana fish consumption advisories are based on the estimate that the average Louisiana resident eats 4 fish meals per month (1 meal = ½ pound). If you or your family members eat more than 4 meals of fish a month from local water bodies, you might increase your health risks. You can contact the Office of Public Health toll free at 1-888-293-7020 for more information about eating fish that contain chemicals.**


Mercury is an element that occurs naturally in the environment. It is released into the environment through natural processes and human activities. Consequently, there are small amounts of mercury in lakes, rivers, and oceans. Here, the mercury is turned into methylmercury, a form that is particularly harmful to an unborn baby or young child. Fish absorb methylmercury as they feed on aquatic organisms. Nearly all fish contain trace amounts of methylmercury. Larger fish, especially those that feed on other fish, contain more methylmercury than smaller fish. Therefore, in general, it is recommended that smaller fish be consumed instead of larger ones.

People are exposed throughout their lives to low levels of mercury. One way they can be exposed to mercury is from eating contaminated fish. Pregnant women can pass mercury from the fish they eat to their unborn babies, and nursing mothers can pass the mercury to their infants through their breast milk. Health effects from harmful levels of mercury can include nervous system and kidney damage. Developing fetuses are more sensitive to the toxic effects of mercury, especially in the first trimester of pregnancy. In addition to developing fetuses, infants and children are more sensitive to the effects of mercury; therefore, consumption advisories are issued at lower fish tissue concentration levels for these groups.

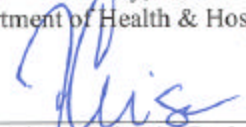
This advisory is issued as a precaution. Further sampling will be carried out by DEQ to determine the need for modifications to this advisory. If you have consumed king mackerel, cobia blackfin tuna or greater amberjack from these waters, it is not likely that there is an immediate need to be concerned about the effects of mercury. However, you should consult your personal doctor if you are concerned.



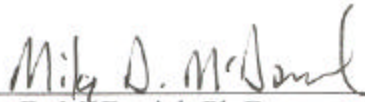
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