

# NEWS RELEASE



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**Headline:** Fish consumption advisory for the Columbia Slough

**Subhead:** *Eating carp, black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, sunfish should be limited due to toxins*

Oregon Public Health officials are urging people who eat fish from the Columbia Slough to limit the amount they eat of carp, black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass and sunfish. This advisory covers the full length of the slough from the mouth of Fairview Lake on the east to its discharge into the Willamette River on the west.

"We want people to be aware that there are certain fish that live their whole lives in the Columbia Slough and we know that these resident fish have higher amounts of toxins in them," said Barbara Stifel, an Oregon Public Health environmental health specialist.

A study by the City of Portland found elevated levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in carp. As a result, health officials are advising people to eat no more than two portions per month from the Columbia Slough, and to prepare the fish in a way that eliminates most of the fat, where toxins such as PCBs concentrate. A portion is considered to be the size and thickness of a person's hand.

"The back and belly fat, skin and internal organs are where most of the PCBs in these resident fish are found. These parts should be thrown away. We are advising people to fillet and cook fish in a way that allows fats to drip off the meat while cooking," Stifel said.

Polychlorinated biphenyls are long-lasting chemicals that can harm a baby's developing brain or nervous system. Therefore, it is especially important for women ages 18 to 45 and children to follow this advice, said Stifel. Public Health officials

encourage women to know where the fish they are eating come from, and if there are advisories for the water body where the fish are being caught. Statewide fish advisories are listed on the Public Health Division's Web site, located at [www.healthoregon.org/fishadv](http://www.healthoregon.org/fishadv).

This advisory is for the resident fish of the Columbia Slough only. Migratory fish such as salmon or steelhead are not included in this advisory because they may only spend a small part of their lives in the Columbia Slough.

"Oregon produces an abundance of healthy foods that include a wide variety of fish from our lakes and rivers," Stifel said. "Fish consumption guidelines are designed to help everyone gain the health benefits of fish, while protecting them from contaminants often found in fish."

This advisory updates a previous advisory issued in 1993.

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