

Protecting Public Health in Oregon via Fish Consumption Advisories

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Background: Fish consumption advisories encourage fish consumption as part of a healthy diet while protecting vulnerable populations, such as children, pregnant women, and tribal and subsistence fishers from the effects of chemical contaminants.

Case Study: The Oregon Public Health Division (OPHD) and the Washington Department of Health (WDOH) received fish tissue sampling results covering a 151-mile stretch of the Columbia River forming the Oregon-Washington border. Analysis found the risk-driving contaminants to be methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). To protect the public, OPHD and WDOH jointly developed fish consumption advisories within the studied area. The advisory recommends that people not eat non-migratory fish within 1 mile of Bonneville Dam, and that they limit their consumption of non-migratory fish species to one meal per week for the rest of the 150-mile stretch of river up to McNary Dam. The advisory is especially important for women of childbearing age because methylmercury and PCBs are developmental neurotoxicants.

Objective 1

Increase awareness of the health benefits and risks of eating locally-caught fish

Objective 2

Increase understanding of Oregon's fish advisory program

Vision

Advisories for the Columbia River and its tributaries would be unnecessary