

# Should I eat the fish I catch?

Advice for people who catch fish in the Lower Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers





A well balanced diet that includes fish can have lots of benefits for health including heart health and children's growth and development.

In general, the benefits of eating fish greatly outweigh the risks.

The risks can be reduced by making sensible choices about the type and amount of fish you eat.

Fish are an important part of a healthy diet. They are high in protein and other essential nutrients, low in saturated fat, and contain omega-3 fatty acids.

## So why do I need this advice?

Over time urban waterways can become polluted with chemicals. Fish may take up some of these chemicals into their bodies.

If any person eats large amounts of these fish, it may affect their health.

The people most likely to be affected are women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, and young children.

## What sort of chemicals can end up in fish?

There are a number of chemicals that can build up in fish. The main ones that can be a problem are PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls).

PCBs were used from the 1930s to the 1970s in industrial products. They have been phased out now, but persist for a long time in the environment.





They can build up in the human body and affect the hormonal and immune systems. PCBs in a mother's body can affect the development of her child's brain.



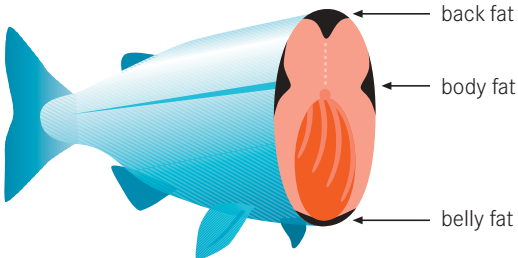
# What can I do to make safer choices about eating fish?

When eating fish caught in these rivers:

- Women of child bearing age and children (under 16) should not eat eels. Other people should limit eating eels they catch to one serve per month.
- Women of child bearing age and children (under 16) should limit eating fish to one serve per month. Other people should limit eating fish they catch to four serves per month.

Servings per month (One serve for adults = 150grams)	Women of child bearing age and children (under 16)	Others
Fish		
Eels		

- Try to eat smaller, younger fish as these are likely to have less pollutants than older larger fish. Make sure the fish are within legal size limits.
- Clean and cook fish properly. Remove skin, fat and internal organs before cooking, some chemicals concentrate in the fatty parts of the fish. Grill or bake fish instead of frying.



## For more information

For more information about eating fish safely, contact the Environmental Health Unit, Department of Human Services on 1300 761 874

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/>

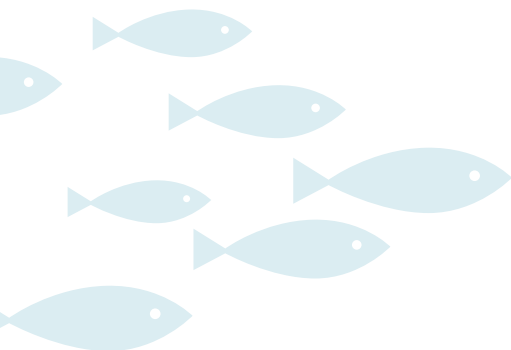
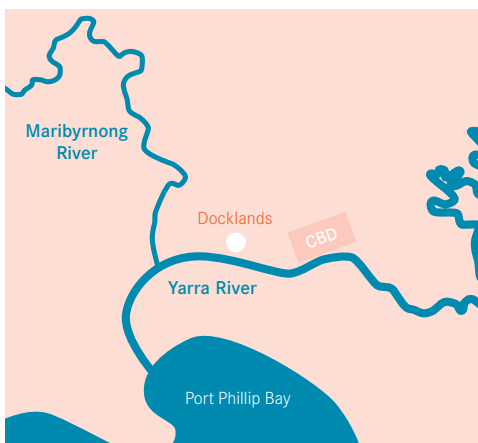
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodmatters/mercuryinfish.cfm>

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts17.html>

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts46.html>

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dpi>

## Victorian urban rivers



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