

Florida's freshwater fish—fun to catch, good to eat & healthy too!

Why eat fish?

Eating fish is an important part of a healthy diet and may help reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. Additionally, fish are rich in vitamins, low in fat, and contain the protein that we need for strong bodies. Fish that are high in omega 3 fatty acids—a type of acid that supports brain and eye development and heart health—are good for both children and adults.

How much should I eat?

Adults who weigh about 170 pounds should eat 8 ounces (uncooked weight) or 6 ounces (cooked weight) of fish per serving, and eating a variety of fish lower in contaminants provides the most benefit. Adults who weigh more than 170 pounds may increase their portion by 1 ounce for every 20 pounds over 170 pounds, while adults who weigh less than 170 pounds should reduce their portion by 1 ounce for every 20 pounds below 170 pounds.

What about mercury exposure?

Mercury levels in most freshwater fish caught in Florida do not lead to health concerns. However, depending on the age of the fish, the type of fish, and the condition of the water that the fish lives in, mercury levels found in fish can vary. Some fish you eat may not have been caught from water bodies tested for mercury, and mercury cannot be cut away, cleaned, or cooked out of the fish. Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, women who are nursing, and children (ages 2–6) are more sensitive to the harmful effects of mercury and should take special precautions to avoid eating fish high in mercury.



Basic Guidelines for Eating Freshwater Fish

The following Basic Eating Guidelines provide general advice to anglers from all untested fresh waters in the state. For more detailed guidance for all fresh waters, consult the Florida Department of Health Fish Consumption Advisories page (<http://bit.ly/FishAdvisories>) or call 850-245-4250. You can search for guidelines for specific water bodies at <https://dchpexternalapps.doh.state.fl.us/fishadvisory/>. (Fish illustrations by Duane Raver, Jr. and Diane Rome Peebles)

Eat up to a maximum of **2 meals per week** of these fish with very low mercury:
(1 meal is 8 oz. uncooked, or 6 oz. cooked)



Blue tilapia

Eat up to a maximum of **1 meal per week** of these fish with very low mercury:



Redear sunfish



Brown bullhead

Eat up to a maximum of **2 meals per month** of these fish with low mercury:



Black crappie



Bluegill



Mayan cichlid



Channel catfish

Including

- Goldline snakehead
- Butterfly peacock bass
- Redbreast sunfish
- Spotted sunfish
- Warmouth
- White catfish

If in one month you eat 2 meals of the fish listed above: Don't eat any more fish listed in the '2 meals per month' category. Instead, eat only other high omega-3, low-mercury fish for the remainder of the month, try: farm raised rainbow trout, salmon, farm raised catfish and mullet.

Eat up to a maximum of **1 meal per month** of these fish with low mercury:

- Black bass including Florida bass or largemouth bass smaller than 16 inches
- Chain pickerel
- Yellow bullhead

If in one month you eat a meal of the fish listed above: Don't eat any more fish listed in the '1 meal per month' category. Instead, eat only other high omega-3, low-mercury fish for the remainder of the month, try: farm raised rainbow trout, salmon, farm raised catfish and mullet.

DO NOT EAT:

- Black bass including Florida bass or largemouth bass larger than 16 inches. Avoid eating bowfin and gar.