

## MERCURY FACTS AT A GLANCE

The Colorado Department of Health (CDH) is in the process of issuing Fish Consumption Advisories (FCAs) on 14 bodies of water in the state.

- ◆ Most recent FCA was Horsetooth
- ◆ Part of ongoing, 5-year sampling of 120 bodies of water in the state
- ◆ Lab work completed on 35
- ◆ Results still pending on 22
- ◆ 14 of the 22 have shows elevated mercury
- ◆ Additional bodies of water may be given FCAs soon

When high levels of mercury found in the fish, FCAs are issued by CDH.

- ◆ Signs will be posted at the site where mercury levels were high in the fish
- ◆ Signs will be posted at Horsetooth
- ◆ See chart for consumption recommendations

What is mercury?

- ◆ Naturally occurs in nature, just like iron, manganese, copper, etc.
- ◆ Several forms of mercury
  - Elemental, an inorganic form
  - Reactive mercury, a positively charged inorganic form
  - Organic mercury
- ◆ Mercury in fish is an organic form
- ◆ Organic is most toxic form of mercury
- ◆ Health concern is associated with the organic form of mercury
- ◆ Drinking water generally contains the inorganic form of mercury, so is not a concern

Why is it in our fish?

- ◆ Fish eat the microorganisms that contain organic mercury
- ◆ Bigger fish eat smaller fish
- ◆ Larger fish are cause for concern with mercury content
- ◆ Mercury tends to accumulate in large predator fish like pike, bass, and walleye.
- ◆ Even fish bought at the grocery store, like salmon & tuna, contain mercury
- ◆ **No trout or salmon warning has been issued**

What other information is available?

- ◆ No discernable pattern has been detected
- ◆ More of a problem in warmer water lakes & reservoirs along the Front Range.
- ◆ Public meetings may be scheduled soon to address public concerns



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

## HORSETOOTH RESERVOIR

2007

### ATTENTION ANGLERS

Routine sampling has shown that some fish from this water exceed the mercury action level of 0.5 parts per million set by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Eating fish that exceed this level may cause health problems, especially for the unborn fetus and small children.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has categorized the fish according to mercury levels. To find out the recommended amounts of fish that may be consumed, find the fish and size you caught and follow the recommendations described below, in terms of the number of meals per month for each group of people.

FISH	SIZE	PREGNANT WOMEN, NURSING WOMEN AND WOMEN WHO PLAN ON BEING PREGNANT	CHILDREN 6 YEARS OR YOUNGER	GENERAL POPULATION
White bass	Larger than 18 inches	Do Not Consume	Do Not Consume	1 Meal per Month
Wiper	Larger than 18 inches	Do Not Consume	Do Not Consume	1 Meal per Month
Walleye	Larger than 12 inches	Do Not Consume	Do Not Consume	1 Meal per Month
Walleye	Smaller than 12 inches	1 Meal per Month	Do Not Consume	2 Meals per Month

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PLEASE REFER TO COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE FISHING REGULATIONS FOR LEGAL  
SIZES AND BAG LIMITS

Risk recommendations are based on:

Meal size for adults = 8 ounces

Meal size for children = 4 ounces.

If the fish species and size you caught are not listed above, either the Department hasn't tested them or they were found to be safe to eat. The report "Mercury Concentrations in Fish from Horsetooth Reservoir" can be found at:

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/monitoring/monitoring.html>

For questions regarding mercury in fish call the Water Quality Control Division (303 692-3500).

For general information about fish and nutrition, consult:

<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/>

For questions about human health and mercury call the Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division (303 692-2700).