

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE USE
May 11, 2010

Contact: Doug Schultz
MDH Communications Office
651-201-4993

Pat McCann
Environmental Health
651-201-4915

Major new study on PFOS in fish shows only minor change needed in safe eating guidelines

Mercury remains contaminant of concern across the state

Most fish tested from lakes outside the metro area have low to undetectable levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), according to a new screening study conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with the state of Minnesota. The study provides new information on PFOS levels in fish from a broad range of lakes across the state.

Fifty-five out of the 59 lakes in this screening study were from outside the metro area. Only one of these lakes required advice to limit consumption based on PFOS. The levels of PFOS in fish in Lake Zumbro, located near Rochester, caused the advice for the general population to change from “unrestricted” to “once a week.” The advice for kids and moms for Lake Zumbro, based on mercury and PFOS, continues to be “once a week.”

The results from the EPA screening study were consistent with the results of this year’s Minnesota interagency fish sampling program. Both the EPA study and the Minnesota program were used to update MDH’s fish consumption guidelines for specific lakes where contaminants in fish have been measured. Lake- or river-specific guidelines are available online at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/eating/sitespecific.html>.

Overall, throughout the state, mercury continues to be the contaminant that is the reason for advice to eat fish less often. PCBs are a concern in some fish species in the major rivers and in Lake Superior. Statewide safe eating guidelines are available online at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/eating/safeeating.html>.

In addition to updated site-specific guidelines, MDH has newly developed resources for Hmong speakers. “Talk about Fish and Ways of Eating Fish” is a DVD that tells about mercury and fish. The DVD was produced by FOUNG HEU, a Twin Cities-based videographer and narrated by John Ny Vang, president of the Capitol Sportsmen’s Chapter of the Minnesota Deerhunters’ Association. MDH’s resources in languages other than English are available online at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/nonenglish/index.html>. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources also included safe fish eating advice in Hmong, Spanish, and Vietnamese in its fishing regulations booklet for the first time this year.

Also, people interested in safe eating guidelines for fish in Minnesota can now subscribe to an e-mail service available through MDH. Subscribers will receive announcements and updates via e-mail. To subscribe, go to <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/index.html> and click on the envelope icon in the right sidebar.

-MDH-