In Minnesota we can catch fish to eat from many rivers and lakes. We also can buy fish to eat from the market.

Fish are fun to catch. Most fish are healthy to eat. They have good fat for our bodies and are especially good for growing babies. It helps their brains and eyes grow strong.

You may have heard that have chemicals. This is true.

Therefore, we are going to talk about the chemical in fish that is of most concern for health in our state. This chemical is mercury

We cannot see, taste or smell mercury whether it is in air, water or in fish.

Mercury is especially harmful to young children and the baby growing inside its mother. So women who are pregnant or planning to have a baby should be careful about the fish they eat. A lot of mercury can even be dangerous for adults.
But fish are nutritious to eat, so how can we get the good health benefits from fish for ourselves and our family without getting too much mercury?

Many people make the mistake by thinking that fish from clear lakes and rivers are good and safe to eat. But mercury does not follow or obey that rule. Mercury resides in all lakes and rivers whether or not they are clear or murky and in the city or rural.

This is because mercury comes with the wind and air. Mercury gets into the air from power plants that burn coal to make electricity and burning trash that contains mercury. Mercury can travel long distances in the air. Most of the mercury in the air in Minnesota are blown in from other places.

It is not a problem to our body’s health when we breathe the air but it is a problem when the mercury falls into lakes and rivers.
It gets into the food fish eat. Fish can’t get the mercury out of their bodies.

When bigger fish eat the smaller fish, they will get the mercury from the smaller fish. The more small fish they eat, the more mercury builds up in their bodies. The longer they live, the more fish they eat and the more mercury they have in their bodies.

On the other hand, fish that only eat bugs and plants have less mercury than fish that eat other fish.

Bigger fish and older fish have the most mercury.

So, to get the good health benefits that come from eating fish with little mercury, choose fish that are smaller and younger. Choose fish that don’t eat other fish.

Though our body has the ability to get rid of mercury naturally, it will take a some time to get rid of the mercury from our body.
So, after choosing the right kind and the smaller size of fish to eat, we must wait for some time before eating another meal with fish. While we wait, our bodies will slowly get rid of the mercury.

**Yog li, tom qab xaiv tau hom ntses uas yog thiab hom ntses mes, los noj, peb yuav tsum tau tos kom ntev me ntsis ua ntej peb rov qab noj duas ib pluag ntses.**

**Lub sib hawm peb tseem tos, peb lub cev yuav muab cov Kua Hlau Mercury no mab mam zom tawm mus.**

That way, the mercury will not hurt us or our children, and we will get the good health benefits that come from fish.

**Thaum ua raws li no, Mercury thiaj yuav tsis ua rau peb los tej me nyuam muaj mob, thiab peb thiaj li tau txoj kev noj qab haus huv los ntawm kev noj ntses.**

Minnesota Department of Health health scientists have developed advice that will help us to know the benefits of eating fish like all the good nutrition as well as to avoid contaminants like mercury as much as possible.

**MN lub Koom Haum Saib Kev Noj Qab Haus Huv Hauv Xeev MN nov, peb cov neeg tshuaj ntsuam tau los tsim kev cob qhia uas pab nej kom paub zoo txog rau ntawm kev noj ntses xws li txhua yam kuj yog zoo zaub thaib zam cov Kua Hlau mercury kom ntau li ntau tau.**

This advice is for two groups of people. The kinds of advice are different for these two different groups. The first group is women who won't become pregnant and men. This group can eat as much bluegill sunfish, crappy, and perch as they want. The advice for this group regarding fish that eat other fish which is largemouth, smallmouth, walleye and northern pike is permitted one meal per week. For group number 2, the advice is different.

**Qhov lus qhia no yog rau ob pab neeg. Cov lus qhia no nyias muaj txawv nyias tsis zoo ib yam rau cov neeg no. Thawj pab yog rau cov poj niam uas lawv tsis xeeb tub thiab cov txiv neej. Pab no nej noj cov ntses bluegill**
Group number 2 includes women who are pregnant or who might become pregnant and children, the advice lets them eat bluegill sunfish, crappy, and perch one meal per week. Bluegill and crappy are fish that don’t eat other fish and have less mercury in their body.

For fish that eat other fish, the advice is more restricted because they accumulate more mercury in their body. So, for small mouth bass, largemouth bass, walleye and northern pike, the advice only allow one meal per month.

When a walleye gets to be bigger than 20 inches or a northern gets to be bigger than 30 inches, that means they’ve lived longer and eaten a lot more smaller fish so people in group number 2 should not eat walleye and northern that exceed that size.
The advice for how often we can safely eat white bass is the same for all people. Men, women and children can safely eat white bass one time each month. This advice may change as we update our information for white bass.

MDH has advice for eating fish caught from specific lakes and rivers and advice for eating fish from the market on their web site.

Fish are great tasting food (meat) and good food for our bodies.

By knowing the right size and kind of fish we choose for our meal and how long we wait until we can eat fish again, we can keep on enjoying the benefits of eating fish.