

PCBs

DOs and DON'Ts

The presence of PCBs in the environment means that everyone needs to be careful to avoid adverse reactions. This checklist can help keep you safe. If you find that a “Don’t” has occurred in your situation, keep notes in the space provided and consult your attorney.

DOs:

- ___ DO consult your local and state health departments or state natural resources department for information on how to obtain PCB advisories for all bodies of water in which you intend to fish.
- ___ DO practice catch and release fishing when fishing in known contaminated waters in order to minimize exposure, and even then practice good hygiene (e.g., frequent and thorough hand washing).
- ___ DO minimize the consumption of fish from contaminated waters and follow all applicable advisories and safe cooking practices.
- ___ DO properly trim, skin, and cook the fish you catch. Remove all the skin and trim the fat from the belly flap, the line along the sides, along the back, and under the skin.
- ___ DO broil, grill, or bake the trimmed, skinned fish on a rack so that the fat, which stores PCBs in higher concentrations, drips away.
- ___ DO keep fish refrigerated or on ice until cleaned and filleted and then refrigerate until cooked.
- ___ DO wash your hands and all cooking utensils and surfaces both before and after contact with raw fish.
- ___ DO cook fish to an internal temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ___ DO consult your doctor if you believe you or a loved one may have suffered ill health effects from PCB exposure.
- ___ DO retain legal counsel to represent you if it is determined or you believe that that you or your property has been exposed to PCBs and are experiencing personal injuries and/or property damage as a result.

DON'Ts:

— DON'T allow your children to play with old appliances, electrical equipment, or electrical transformers, or to play in the dirt in known contaminated areas, since all of these may contain PCBs.

— DON'T eat any visibly deformed fish (e.g., with tumors or skin lesions).

— DON'T assume that cooking or soaking the fish completely removes the contaminants. Heat from cooking does, however, melt some of the fat and allow some of it, as well as the PCBs it contains, to drip away.

— DON'T, therefore, use fat drippings to prepare sauces or gravies, since PCBs are found at higher concentrations in the fat of contaminated fish.

— DON'T feed fish to your children as often or in the same quantity as you yourself are able to eat it.

— DON'T eat any fish from contaminated waters if you are pregnant or nursing.

— DON'T delay in seeking legal counsel if you suspect you may have suffered damages as a result of PCB exposure. All states have laws that limit the time during which a lawsuit may be brought, and if you do not act promptly, you may forfeit your legal rights.
