

## **CLEANING AND COOKING YOUR FISH**

PCBs and most other organic contaminants usually build up in a fish's fat deposits and just underneath the skin. By removing the skin and fat before cooking, you can reduce the levels of these chemicals. Mercury, however, collects in the fish's muscle and cannot be reduced by cleaning and cooking methods. To reduce PCBs and other organics:

- Remove all skin.
- Slice off fat belly meat along the bottom of the fish.
- Cut away any fat above the fish's backbone.
- Cut away the V-shaped wedge of fat along the lateral line on each side of the fish.
- Bake or broil trimmed fish on a rack or grill so some of the remaining fat drips away.
- Discard any drippings. Do not eat them or use them for cooking other foods.

**Important:** You must follow these cleaning and cooking directions. The meal advice is for eating skinned and trimmed fish.

Also remember that larger and older fish tend to collect more contaminants, and fatty fish (such as channel catfish, carp, and eels) tend to collect PCBs and other organic chemicals. Eating smaller, younger fish and avoiding fatty species can help limit your exposure. Your exposure depends not only on levels in the fish, but also the amount of fish you eat. The consumption of any fish from contaminated waters is a matter of personal choice.

Trout stocked from Fish & Boat Commission state fish hatcheries are subject to the blanket one-meal-per-week consumption advisory that applies to recreationally caught sport fish in Pennsylvania. If additional consumption advisories for state hatchery trout are appropriate for 2021, they will be announced in February or March 2021.