

# HEALTH EFFECTS OF PCB CONTAMINATED FISH IN THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

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**PCBs DEFINED: Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)** are synthetic chemicals that often remain in the environment - PCBs are found in fish that live most of their lives in the **Lower Willamette River**. PCBs were used in industry along the river in the past and are now banned.

**POPULATION MOST AT RISK:** The greatest effects of PCBs are on fetuses and children. This is because the brain, nervous system, immune system, thyroid, and reproductive organs are still developing.

## ENDOCRINE EFFECTS - THYROID

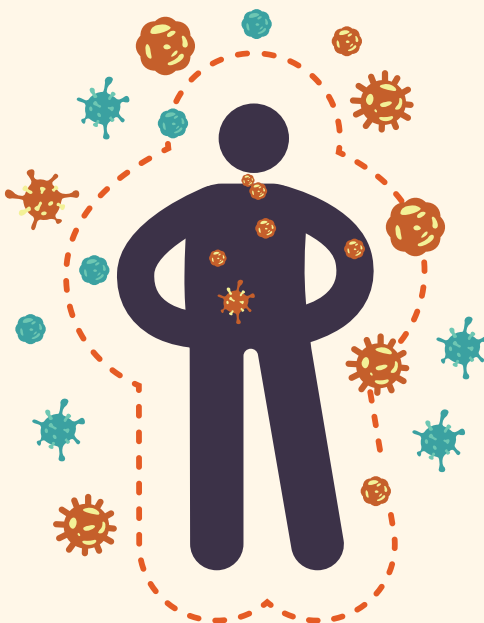
PCBs can change hormone levels that help control brain development and behavior change.

## HEPATIC EFFECTS - LIVER

PCBs are broken down in the liver. They can cause damage to the liver which is especially bad for people with reduced liver function.

## REPRODUCTIVE AND DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS

Children of pregnant people who eat large quantities of contaminated fish may be exposed to PCBs during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. The baby may arrive early and be smaller. As the child grows, it may have difficulty gaining weight, trouble explaining concepts with words, and difficulty paying attention and remembering things.



## IMMUNE SUPPRESSION

PCBs weaken the immune system making the body more susceptible to other diseases. It is especially important to avoid exposure because no specific treatment exists for PCB accumulation.

## OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Cardiovascular - **Heart**
- Gastrointestinal - **Stomach**
- Neurological systems - **Brain**
- Lifetime risk of cancer

VISIT: [MULTCO.US/FISH](https://multco.us/fish)

## Riskiest Fish to Eat

CARP



BASS



CATFISH



**WAYS TO REDUCE RISK:** Only eating filet, smaller portions, fewer meals per month, and smaller, younger, less predatory fish.

## Healthy Fish to Eat

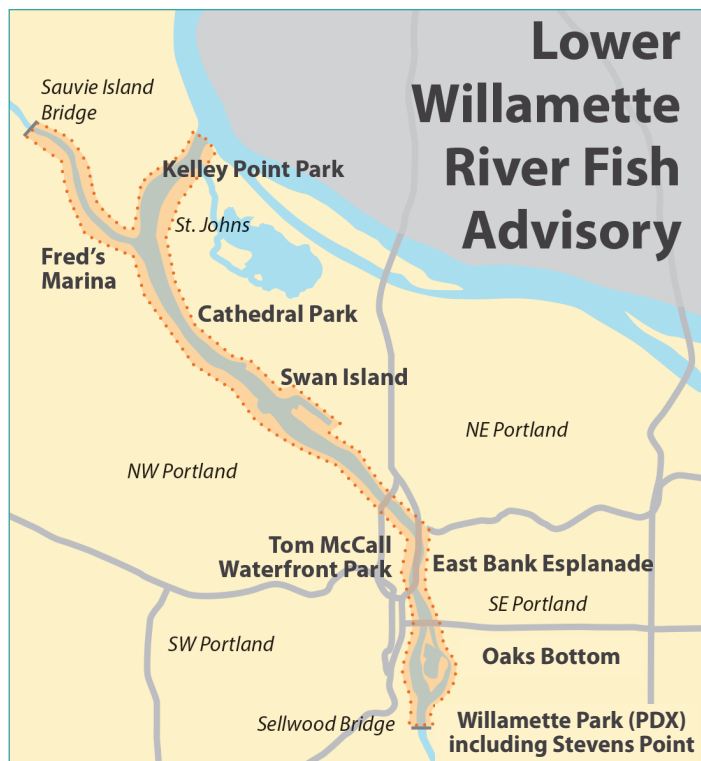
SALMON



STEELHEAD



SHAD



VISIT: [MULTCO.US/FISH](https://multco.us/fish)