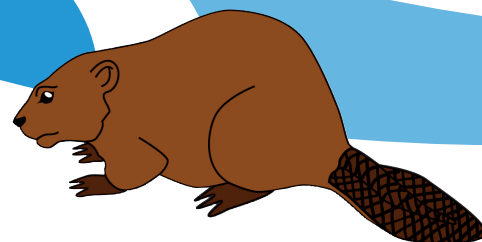




Beaver

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – CONTAMINANTS FACT SHEETS



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BEAVER?

Beavers are large rodents that are found throughout the NWT, especially in areas with rich aquatic vegetation.

Beavers spend time in the water but are mainly land-based animals. Land-based animals are less likely to build up high levels of contaminants than marine animals (like beluga or ringed seal).

Beavers eat plants and are low on the food chain. Animals that do not eat other animals tend to have low levels of contaminants.

Beavers have been sampled for contaminants in the NWT and have consistently been shown to have low levels of contaminants.

BEAVER IS GOOD FOR US!

Beaver meat, liver and feet are excellent sources of protein. The tail has less protein but is still a good source of this nutrient. Protein is needed to build and repair all parts of the body.

Beaver liver is a great source of vitamin A and iron. Vitamin A helps keep the skin, bones and eyes healthy. Iron is used to make healthy blood.

Beaver is also used for traditional medicinal purposes, or can be used as bait to catch other animals that are sources of nutritious food.

For more nutritional information on beaver, see the GNWT Health and Social Service's Nutritional Food Fact Sheets Series (<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>).

IS BEAVER SAFE TO EAT?

Yes! Beaver is safe to eat. It is also one of the healthiest foods available. The benefits of consuming beaver are much greater than the risks of contaminant exposure.

In 1999, a health risk assessment was done on beaver liver from the Slave River Delta region (between Fort Resolution and Fort Smith) that was found to have slightly elevated levels of a heavy metal called cadmium (*see Cadmium fact sheet* - www.hss.gov.nt.ca). The assessment concluded that

34 beaver livers per year could be consumed safely. In 2013, another study was done on beavers in the same region and levels were very similar. To reduce exposure to cadmium, do not smoke cigarettes and avoid second hand smoke. Smokers have about 4-5 times higher blood cadmium concentrations than non-smokers.