



LAKE TROUT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – CONTAMINANTS FACT SHEETS



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT LAKE TROUT?

Lake trout have a range of coloring, including green, gray, brown and black with a light coloured belly. Lake trout can be found throughout the Northwest Territories. It can take up to 12 years for this fish to mature. The flesh can have a very light colour but can range to a deep pink.

Lake trout, like most other fish species, often contains some mercury. Mercury is a heavy metal contaminant (*see Mercury fact sheet – <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>*) that can build up in the organs and in the meat.

Lake trout eat other fish and are high in the food chain. Fish that eat other fish tend to have higher levels of mercury due to a process called biomagnification (*see Contaminants Overview fact sheet – <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>*). As well, older fish tend to have higher levels of mercury than younger fish due to a process called bioaccumulation (*see Contaminants Overview fact sheet – <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>*). This does not necessarily mean that lake trout are unsafe to eat.

LAKE TROUT IS GOOD FOR US!

Lake trout is an excellent source of protein. Protein is needed to build and repair all parts of the body. It is also a source of healthy fats, called omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fats help to keep the heart healthy and are good for brain development.

Lake trout is also a source of phosphorus. Phosphorus is important for healthy bones and teeth and it also helps the body to grow.

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

IS LAKE TROUT SAFE TO EAT?

Yes! Lake trout are safe to eat. They are also some of the healthiest foods available. The benefits of consuming lake trout are much greater than the risks of contaminant exposure. However, in certain locations, fish consumption notices have been issued in the past for lake trout. Check the GNWT Health and Social Services website for current consumption notices (<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>).

By following consumption notices, you can safely enjoy all traditional foods.

In locations where fish consumption notices have not been issued for lake trout, it is recommended for pregnant women and children under 12 to follow the NWT General Fish Consumption Guidelines for lake trout consumption (<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>).