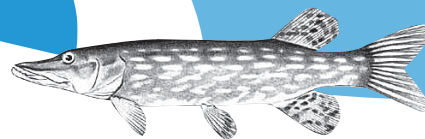




NORTHERN PIKE (JACKFISH)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – CONTAMINANTS FACT SHEETS



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT NORTHERN PIKE?

Northern pike, also called jackfish, can be found throughout mainland Northwest Territories. They like weedy areas of warm lakes and slow rivers. Northern pike are dark green and brown with lighter spots along their sides. They are known for their sharp teeth!

Northern pike, 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.

Northern pike 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 they are unsafe to eat.

NORTHERN PIKE IS GOOD FOR US!

Northern pike is an excellent source of protein. Protein is needed to build and repair all parts of the body.

Northern pike is rich in several other important nutrients, including selenium, vitamin D, vitamin B-12, and niacin. These nutrients have many different functions and they are all required to keep the body healthy. When sunshine hits your skin, your body

can make its own vitamin D but in the winter when the sunshine is limited, it is important to eat foods that provide this vitamin for us, like northern pike.

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 NORTHERN PIKE SAFE TO EAT?

Yes! Northern pike are safe to eat. They are also some of the healthiest foods available. The benefits of consuming northern pike are much greater than the risks of contaminant exposure. However, in certain locations, fish consumption notices have been issued in the past for northern pike. 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 northern pike, it is recommended for pregnant women and children under 12 to follow the NWT General Fish Consumption Guidelines for northern pike consumption (<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>).