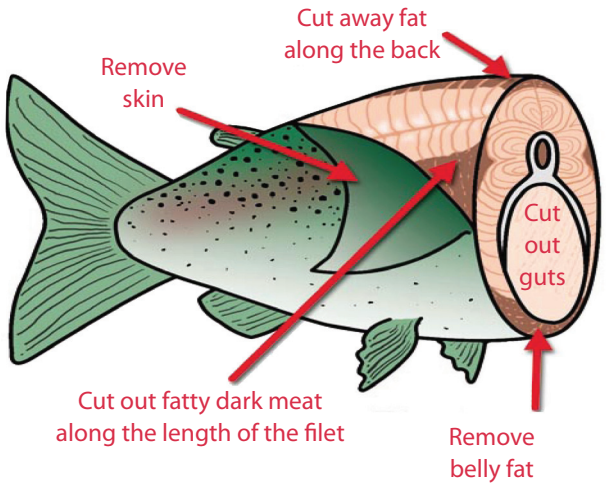
A Safer Way to Prepare Fish

Dioxin and PCBs are stored mainly in the fat of seafood. You can reduce your exposure to these chemicals by using these techniques:

- From fish, remove the skin, thin layer of fat under the skin, guts, belly fat, fat along the back, and the fatty dark meat along the length of the filet.
- Bake or grill fish. Throw away cooking juices.
- Don't use the whole fish, fat, skin, organs, or juices in soups or stews.
- Don't eat the soft green parts of blue crabs where toxins build up.



DO NOT EAT the skin, fat, and liver of fish and blue crabs from the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay.

You could be exposed to toxic chemicals.

Solving the Problem

In response to the dioxin and PCB problem, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) initiated a total maximum daily load (TMDL) project in the Houston Ship Channel and Upper Galveston Bay to:

- Pinpoint sources of dioxin and PCBs.
- Develop an action plan to reduce dioxin.

The Houston Ship Channel Stakeholders Group is advising the TCEQ and H-GAC on this project. The group includes representatives from government, industrial facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community interests in the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay watersheds.

For More Information

TEXAS Department of State Health Services
www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood
512-834-6757

Galveston Bay Foundation
http://galvbay.org/advocacy_seafood.html

H-GAC Houston-Galveston Area Council
www.h-gac.com/dioxintmdl

TCEQ
www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/26-houston_group.html

SEAFOOD CAUTION

Fish and Blue Crab

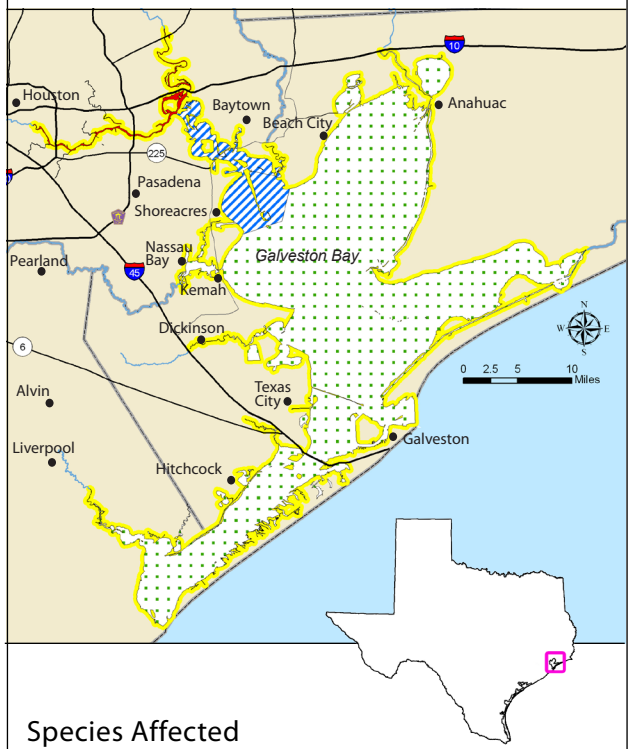
SEAFOOD CONSUMPTION ADVISORY

HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL AND GALVESTON BAY

PCBs and Dioxin Have Been Found in Blue Crabs and Fish*

IN THE HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL AND GALVESTON BAY

Areas of PCB and Dioxin Contamination



**According to The Texas Department of State Health Services*

Seafood Consumption Advisory

The Texas Department of State Health Services has issued seafood consumption advisories for the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay.

- Adults should eat no more than one eight-ounce meal per month of seafood from these areas.
- Women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant, and children under twelve years old, should not eat seafood from these areas.

Seafood May Contain Dioxin and PCBs

Dioxin is a term for a group of toxic chemicals found throughout the environment. Dioxin has no known constructive use and is a byproduct of certain industrial activities. Exhaust from vehicles, forest fires, and burning trash also release dioxin into the air.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are man-made chemicals. PCB production was banned in the 1970s, however, the chemicals continue to enter the environment through spills, leaks and improper disposal.

Dioxin and PCBs build up in fish as they filter tainted sediment or water, or eat contaminated aquatic life forms.

Exposure to Dioxin and PCBs is Dangerous

Dioxin and PCBs stay in humans and animals for years. Exposure occurs when people eat food with dioxin and PCBs. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are especially susceptible and can pass the contaminants on to their unborn or nursing babies.

Potential Health Problems from Repeated Exposure

- Increased cancer risks
- Immune system issues
- Liver damage
- Thyroid disorders
- Type 2 diabetes
- Digestive tract issues
- Fatigue and headaches
- Skin sores and rashes
- Nerve disorders (motor skill problems)
- Endometriosis and irregular menstrual cycles
- Birth defects
- Reduced fertility
- Child learning and developmental defects

Fish and Blue Crabs that May Contain Dioxin or PCBs

- Fatty fish (like catfish)
- Fish caught near industrial areas

The glands and organs of fish and blue crab caught in the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Bay may contain high levels of contaminants and should not be eaten.

Reduce Your Exposure to Toxins

- Eat fish from a variety of water bodies to reduce risk of exposure to any one contaminant or group of contaminants.
- Eat a mix of different kinds of fish.
- Eat smaller, younger fish. (Younger fish usually have less contaminants than larger, older fish.)
- Practice "catch and release" fishing.