

Anglers' fish-eating habits -- and favorite recipes for their catch -- are the focus of new state efforts aimed at increasing awareness about the health benefits of eating fish while reducing exposure to environmental contaminants.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is seeking male anglers 50 years and older to complete an online survey about their fish consumption. Previous surveys have shown that some older men eat more fish than younger men or women. And while those most vulnerable to the effects of environmental contaminants are pregnant women, their developing fetuses and young children -- older adults also can be affected, according to Pamela Imm, with the DHS Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health.

The online survey, found at [study.uwsc.wisc.edu/anglers](http://study.uwsc.wisc.edu/anglers), seeks information on where this group fishes, how much and what type of fish they eat, and where they get information about consumption advice.

At the same time, the Department of Natural Resources is seeking favorite recipes for fish caught from Wisconsin waters. A selection of recipes from entrants will be included in an online cookbook, *Healthy Dishes With Wisconsin's Fishes*.

The survey and outreach are funded by federal dollars targeted at improving fish advisory programs throughout the Great Lakes, says Candy Schrank, a DNR toxicologist who coordinates the fish consumption advisory DNR jointly issues every year with the state health services department.

"Wisconsin and other Great Lakes states want to know more about people who eat fish and how to get information to them on the health benefits and risks of eating fish," she says.

The data that DNR collected over the past 40 years on mercury and PCBs in fish show contaminant levels at some locations have dropped, supporting assertions that fish respond to sediment cleanup and mercury emission reductions. However, mercury levels are still high enough that most waters carry a statewide consumption advisory with about 149 having more stringent advice due to higher levels of mercury, PCBs or other chemicals.

More information about Wisconsin's fish consumption advice and contaminant levels in state residents who frequently eat fish, can be found in "Give in to Fish Fervor" in the December 2011 issue of *Natural Resources Magazine* or on the Fish Consumption Advisories page of the DNR website.