



news release

From The Texas Department of Health
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Health Commissioner Warns of Dioxin Hazard in Three Areas

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) today advised the public to limit consumption of fish from parts of the Brazos and Neches rivers and catfish and blue crabs from portions of the Houston Ship Channel.

Dr. Robert Bernstein, Commissioner of Health, signed three advisories specifying areas where dioxin, a probable cancer-causing agent, has been found in fish and shellfish. Besides cancer, dioxin may also cause other adverse health conditions, such as liver damage and reproductive abnormalities, after long-term consumption.

Anyone who eats fish or shellfish affected by the advisories should limit consumption to no more than one meal per month, not exceeding an eight-ounce portion. Women of child-bearing age and children should avoid eating any of the specified fish or shellfish.

The waters and species of fish affected by the three advisories are

- (1) The Brazos River and connecting waters, downstream from the FM 521 bridge near Brazoria to the mouth of the river--all fish species;
- (2) The Neches River and connecting waters, downstream from the U.S. 96 bridge near Evadale to the U.S. Interstate 10 bridge near Beaumont--all fish species; and
- (3) The Houston Ship Channel and adjacent waters, including upper Galveston Bay, north of a line connecting Red Bluff Point, Five Mile Cut Marker and Houston Point--catfish and blue crabs.

The health advisories will remain effective until formally rescinded or modified.

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(For more information, contact Kirk Wiles, Environmental Quality Specialist, Division of Shellfish Sanitation Control, at 512/458-7510, or Margaret Wilson, Public Information Coordinator, Public Health Promotion Division, at 512/458-7405.)