



May 24, 2001

Dear Health Care Provider:

Fish is an important part of a healthy diet. However, some fish from certain areas have harmful amounts of chemical contaminants such as: mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and banned pesticides. Your patients can get the benefits of fish and avoid the risks by following fish consumption advisories.

We need your help in reaching everyone in communities you serve with information about fish caught by family and friends that may pose certain health hazards. We especially want to reach the more susceptible populations which include children, pregnant women, and nursing infants.

In December 1998, we sent members of the U.S. medical community the brochure, *Should I Eat the Fish I Catch? A Guide to Healthy Eating of the Fish You Catch*. It includes information on how to reduce health risk by selecting certain species or sizes of fish; trimming and cooking fish properly; and following fish consumption advisories. We have enclosed additional translations of that brochure.

In addition to following the advice provided in the enclosed brochures, susceptible populations need to be aware of local fish consumption advisories issued by State and local health authorities. The State in which you practice has developed advice on specific waters as well as general advice covering untested waters. This general advice is consistent with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry recommendations regarding precautionary warnings on untested local waters or species. Specific advice and contact information for your state is available through the website www.epa.gov/ost/fish.

For additional copies of the enclosed materials, contact EPA's National Center for Environmental Publications, 11029 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242, or telephone number 1-800-490-9198. For more information about fish advisories, contact the EPA Office of Water, Fish Consumption Program, MS-4305, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460.

Diane C. Regas
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Water
United States Environmental Protection Agency

Sincerely yours,

Henry Falk, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Surgeon General
Assistant Administrator
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry

Enclosure:

Should I Eat the Fish I Catch? A Guide to Healthy Eating of the Fish You Catch