

FISH CONSUMPTION IN LITTLE ST. FRANCIS RIVER

NOTICE!

Exercise caution when preparing all suckers and carp from the Little St. Francis River. The skeletons of these fish contain elevated levels of lead; remove the vertebrae and ribs for ALL preparations. Fillets of suckers and carp caught in this river are safe to eat. For help identifying your fish, visit www.mdc.mo.gov/fishing/species.



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH &
SENIOR SERVICES**

BACKGROUND

Historic lead mining in the Little St. Francis River watershed has resulted in elevated concentrations of lead in the bones of certain fish. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) found these levels to be a potential health risk when the fish are prepared in such a way as to make the fish vertebrae and ribs edible, like pickling or grinding carp and suckers. However, there was no risk found from eating the fillets of these fish. For this recommendation, DHSS evaluated data collected by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). More specific guidance on canning, pickling and grinding game fish can also be found in the [2024 MO Fish Advisory](#). For other questions related to the safe consumption of fish, contact us here:

**Bureau of
Environmental
Epidemiology**
at
(573)-751-6102,
or email:
info@health.mo.gov

Lead

Heavy Metal with Heavier Consequences

There is no safe level of lead in the bloodstream; any amount of lead is toxic. Some symptoms are not obvious, which is why testing for lead levels in the blood is so important.

Children are at the highest risk of lead poisoning, especially from ages 0-6.

Children

- Brain and Nervous System**
Lower IQ, behavior problems and learning disabilities. Damage to nervous system function.
- Hearing**
Hearing loss.
- Body**
Bone and muscle deterioration.
- Growth**
Slowed growth.
- Blood**
Anemia.
- Kidneys**
Abnormal function and damage.

Adults

- Brain and Nervous System**
Memory loss, irritability, lack of concentration, headaches and depression. Speech and language problems. Damage to nervous system function.
- Cardiovascular**
High blood pressure.
- Body**
Fatigue, muscle and joint pain.
- Digestive System**
Poor appetite, nausea and constipation.
- Kidneys**
Abnormal function and damage.
- Reproductive System**
Men: Decreased sex drive and sperm count, sperm abnormalities.
Women: Spontaneous miscarriage.

