



# Environmental Public Health Tracking

USING EPHT DATA AND RESOURCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Helping Promote Health Advice to Sensitive Populations

### What was the problem/situation?

All fish contain various levels of mercury. For most people, the health benefits of eating fish outweigh the potential risks from contaminants. However, the EPA recommends sensitive populations, identified as pregnant women, women of child bearing age, nursing mothers, and child younger than 13, consume no more than (1) fish meal per week due to the potential risk mercury poses to the developing nervous system of fetus and young children. As filleting fish will not reduce the levels of mercury, sensitive populations can reduce the amount of mercury in their fish meals by consuming smaller, legal-size fish.

### How was Tracking involved?

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) program partners with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on extensive, annual fish-tissue studies at various Missouri lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. The MDHSS has actively produced an annual Fish Advisory to help consumers make informed decisions about eating fish from Missouri's numerous waterbodies without discouraging them from eating fish. The most recent science is used to develop reasonable, conservative consumption guidelines based on US Food and Drug Administration and US Environmental Protection Agency draft advice on fish consumption. Tracking has mapped Missouri's waterbodies with fish advisories and helps maintain fish advisory data sets. Since 2013, the MO Tracking program has focused efforts on providing resources to get materials out to promote healthy practices to sensitive populations who may be at more risks of potential adverse health effects from the contaminants found in fish.

### What action was taken to resolve the problem?

The advisory produced by the MDHSS, includes several risk communications, including: instructions on trimming and cooking your fish to reduce fat and chemical contaminants, a description of the contaminants of concern for Missouri, a breakout of future chemical considerations, a special advisory regarding the dangers of using lead



**The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program**  
Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) is a program within the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. EPHT is part of a larger initiative to establish Environmental Public Health Tracking systems at the national and state levels.

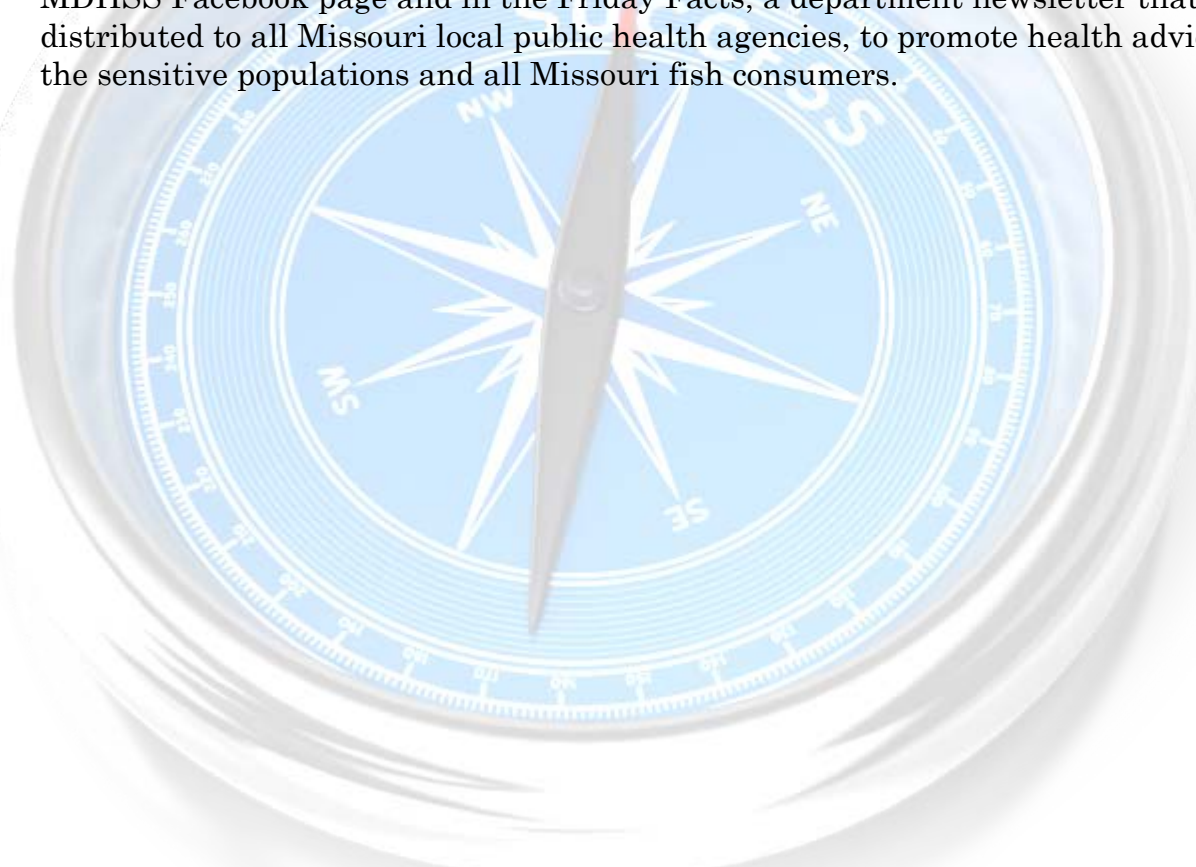




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fishing items (e.g. sinkers, weights, shots, jig head and weighted hooks), a special advisory regarding why canning, pickling, and grinding may increase the amount of lead ingested, and a section on calculating the fish fillet advisory concentration (FFAC) for both cancer and non-cancer health effects. The MDHSS EPHT program actively provides materials to the MDC and DNR to distribute at their agency events and exhibits, as well as providing manpower and materials at selected health department events and exhibits. New in 2015, is the Fish Advisory Interactive Map that is now available for use on mobile devices. Advisories are consistently monitored and updated on the interactive map. The annual Fish Advisory is available in hard copy and electronically on the MDHSS website. The fish advisory is promoted on the MDHSS Facebook page and in the Friday Facts, a department newsletter that is distributed to all Missouri local public health agencies, to promote health advice to the sensitive populations and all Missouri fish consumers.



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