



# Prescriptions for PREVENTION



Guidance from the Western States  
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

## Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and furans



### Did you know?

**A**lthough they are now banned for use in the US, PCBs are persistent organic pollutants that stay in the environment and our bodies long after initial use or exposure. Though still sometimes concerning, overall exposure levels in the US have been decreasing in recent years. The primary route of exposure to PCBs and dioxins is through our diet, including through fatty fish and, for infants and young children, breast milk. PCBs increase your chance of getting cancer.



### Do

- ✓ **When eating fish**, check [State, Territory and Tribe Fish Advisories](#).
- ✓ **Non-fatty seafoods** are lower in PCBs and related chemicals and include cod, haddock, shrimp and tilapia.
- ✓ **To reduce exposures** if you eat fatty fish such as salmon (which also has beneficial omega-3 fatty acids):
  - ✓ **Remove skin** from filets or steaks;
  - ✓ **Trim fatty areas** (belly, back, and sides);
  - ✓ **Cook so fat drips away**; boil, bake, or grill fish and discard the liquid;
  - ✓ **If deep frying fish**, discard the oil.
- ✓ **Select lean cuts of meat** and low or nonfat dairy products.
- ✓ **Encourage good hand washing**, especially before eating and wash children's toys and play surfaces regularly.



### Don't

- ✗ **Do not allow** children to play near or touch:
  - **Old electrical equipment** or transformers;
  - **Soils** near uncontrolled hazardous waste sites;
  - **Old caulk**, and old light fixtures.
- ✗ **Do not burn** plastic materials.
- ✗ **Do not do your own major renovations** if you live in a building constructed before 1977, PCBs may be present.
  - When repairs are needed and PCBs may be present work should be done by certified abatement workers. [More information here](#);
  - For information on PCBs in schools, [click here](#).



For more information, scan the code or visit [wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards](https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards)