



Prescriptions for PREVENTION

Guidance from the Western States
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit



Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and furans



Did you know?

Although they have been banned for use in the US since the late 1970's, PCBs are persistent organic pollutants that stay in the environment and our bodies for a very long time. Overall exposure levels in the US have been decreasing in recent years, but new exposures do still sometimes happen, especially when older buildings or electronics are disturbed. The primary route of exposure to PCBs and dioxins is through our diet, including fatty fish. For infants and young children, breast milk is the most common route. PCBs increase the 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 including:
 - cod, haddock, shrimp and tilapia
- If you eat fatty fish such as salmon, which also has beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, you can reduce exposures by:
 - Removing skin from filets or steaks
 - Trimming fatty areas like belly, back, and sides
 - Cooking 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 with soap and water



- Do not allow children to play near or touch:
 - Old electrical equipment or transformers
 - Soils near hazardous or e-waste recycling sites
 - Old caulk, and old light fixtures
- Do not burn plastic materials or other waste
- Do not do your own major renovations if you live in a building constructed before 1977, PCBs may be present
 - If 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

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