



# What you need to know:

## WALLEYE FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR BULL SHOALS AND NORFORK

### What is happening?

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) issued a fish consumption advisory in January 2023. It warns people about eating walleye caught on Bull Shoals Lake (Marion, Baxter, and Boone counties) and Norfolk Lake (Baxter and Fulton counties) because of high levels of mercury found in walleye that could put human health at risk.

### What action should I take?

No more than two meals per month of walleye (18 inches or longer) is recommended. Pregnant or breastfeeding women, women planning to be pregnant, and children under seven years of age should not eat walleye (18 inches or longer). Walleye 18 inches and longer are the only walleye the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission allows to be caught and kept.

This advisory is only for walleye. Other fish species are considered safe to eat in any amount. People who don't eat walleye often, such as vacationers and sports anglers, are at little risk for adverse health effects.

Anyone who ate walleye from these lakes in the past is likely okay if their meals were in moderation. Any associated health risks are based on long-term consumption and are not tied to eating fish occasionally. Anyone concerned should speak to their health care provider.

### Is other recreational activity safe?

It is safe to be in or around Bull Shoals Lake and Norfolk Lake. This includes fishing, bird watching, swimming, and boating. The advisory also does not limit the use of Bull Shoals Lake or Norfolk Lake as a drinking water source.

### Why is this important?

Eating fish with mercury will not make people sick immediately. But as you eat more, mercury can build up in the body and, over time, potentially cause adverse health effects. Eating fish that contain higher levels of mercury may also harm an unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system.

Fish are an important, low-fat source of protein. Knowing and following the fish consumption advisories allows you to safely keep fish as an important part of your diet.

### How can I learn more?

Visit [www.healthy.arkansas.gov](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov) and type 'mercury' in the Smart Search box on the right-hand side of the page.

