



NAVAJO NATION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
P.O. Box 339, Window Rock, Navajo Nation, (AZ) 86515  
Tel. (928) 871-7692 · Fax. (928) 871-7996



Joe Shirley, Jr.  
PRESIDENT

Frank Dayish, Jr.  
VICE-PRESIDENT

**Navajo Nation Fish Consumption Health Advisory**

The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) in cooperation with the Navajo Nation Division of Health and Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Department is issuing a fish consumption advisory for Red Lake near Navajo, NM, and Morgan Lake, NM. A recent fish tissue study completed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NNEPA concluded that methylmercury concentrations in catfish caught from Red Lake exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) recommended human health criterion. Selenium concentrations in bass and catfish caught from Morgan Lake also exceeded the USEPA human health criterion.

Based on a human health risk assessment using USEPA guidelines, the following fish consumption rates are recommended:

- Children under 6 years of age should eat no more than one 3-ounce meal of fish per month from Red Lake. Limit consumption of fish from Morgan Lake to one or two 3-ounce meals per week and no more than six 3-ounce meals per month.
- Pregnant women, nursing women, or women who may become pregnant should eat no more than one 8-ounce meal of fish per month from Red Lake. Limit consumption of fish from Morgan Lake to one or two 8-ounce meals per week and no more than six 8-ounce meals per month.
- Children 6 years of age and older and other healthy adults should eat no more than one 8-ounce meal every two weeks from Red Lake. Limit consumption of fish from Morgan Lake to three 8-ounce meals per week.

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a well-balanced diet even though they nearly all contain small concentrations of contaminants such as mercury. While the healthy occasional consumer of fish is at little risk, frequent ingestion of contaminants over a long period of time could result in significant health problems. Sensitive populations such as unborn and young children are more susceptible to these health problems than the general population.

With this in mind, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) and USEPA recommend that women of child-bearing age eat no more than one 6-ounce meal of fish per week from waters not covered by an existing fish advisory. Children should consume smaller portions. Until additional studies can be conducted, these USFDA/USEPA recommendations should be applied to all waters of the Navajo Nation not mentioned in this advisory.

If there are any questions about these guidelines, contact Steve Austin, Senior Hydrologist with the NNEPA Water Quality Program at 505-368-1037. If you have specific medical concerns related to mercury or selenium ingestion, contact Ben Muneta, M.D. with the Navajo Division of Health Epi-Center at 928-871-6867. For questions on fishing opportunities or regulations, contact the Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Department at 928-871-6451.