Fish Contamination Education Collaborative (FCEC)
General Fact Sheet

Facts for Consumers About Fish Contamination

- Harmful chemicals have been found in some fish caught off the local coast of Los Angeles and Orange counties. These chemicals—called DDTs and PCBs—pose a health risk for people who regularly eat contaminated fish.

- Anyone who eats these fish regularly risks health problems, including cancer, liver disease and other problems with the immune and endocrine system. Women of child-bearing age and children are more sensitive to the harmful chemicals and should be especially careful to avoid contaminated fish.

- Eating these fish once in a while probably will not make you sick.

- In particular, high levels of DDTs and PCBs have been found in white croaker (also called kingfish or tomcod).

- Consumers should not buy fish directly from anglers on piers.

- Consumers should do the following to be aware of fish contamination at local markets:
  - Ask where the fish at your market comes from.
  - Buy fish from market owners who get fish from licensed wholesalers, distributors or commercial fishermen.
  - Be sure that your market owner is aware of local fish contamination issues.

- To reduce exposure to DDTs and PCBs when eating fish caught locally, consumers must take the following precautions:
  - Eat only the fillet. Use only the fillet when making soup.
  - Before cooking, remove and throw away the head, guts, kidneys, liver and fatty parts such as the skin and belly flap.
  - Bake, broil, steam or grill fish, letting fatty juices drip away.

These tips are provided by the Fish Contamination Education Collaborative (FCEC), an outreach and education project under the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA). For more information about the dangers of fish contamination and ways you can ensure your safety, visit www.pvsfish.org.