

Our dioxin safety limit double that of N.Y. state

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Canada's safety limit for dioxin contamination in fish in Lake Ontario is only half as strict as that set by the state of New York.

David Axelrod, New York state health commissioner, announced yesterday that traces of dioxin had been found to be above their standard of 10 parts-per-trillion (ppt), in 35 of 46 fish samples taken from the lake.

State officials have issued a warning to all women of child-bearing age not to eat fish from the lake. Dioxin, a chemical byproduct, is known to cause cancer, birth defects and reproductive problems when given in low doses to test animals.

However, three weeks ago Canada's department of health and welfare set its safe level of dioxin in fish at 20 ppt (twice that of the U.S.

standards) and Ontario's environment ministry has adopted that level.

A health and welfare spokesman said, "We are still waiting for the official statement from representatives in New York, on the dioxin levels. Once we receive it, we'll examine our position and then comment on it."

She said she expected to know their position later on this week.

A source of dioxin in Lake Ontario has been identified as Hooker Chemicals and Plastic Corp., of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

A spokesman for the Fisheries Council of Canada said that, although they're concerned about contaminated fish, as long as they're within federal safety limits, the council is satisfied.