The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP) was established in response to studies that showed the presence of contaminants reaching the Arctic ecosystem from other parts of the world. In Yukon, the Program is managed by the Yukon Contaminants Committee, a partnership among Federal departments, the Territorial Government, the Council of Yukon First Nations, other First Nations, Yukon College and the Yukon Conservation Society. This Committee steers research conducted under the Program in Yukon.

The goal of the NCP and the Yukon Contaminants Committee is to reduce and, wherever possible, eliminate contaminants in traditionally harvested foods, as well as provide information that informs individuals and communities about their food use.

Yukon has an abundance of wild foods that can be harvested as part of a healthy Northern lifestyle. Eating our wild traditional foods is a wise and safe decision.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Council of Yukon First Nations
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Yukon Conservation Society
phone (867) 668-5678
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www.yukonconservation.org

Northern Contaminants Program
phone (819) 953-8109
Fax (849) 953-9066
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If you have any questions please contact the Yukon Contaminants Committee

Production and Photos by Mary Gamberg
Caribou and Moose

Caribou and moose meat is safe to eat throughout the Yukon.

In some parts of Yukon, a naturally occurring metal, cadmium, is taken in by animals as they eat and drink. This metal concentrates in the liver and kidneys of the animals. The organs are safe to eat, but should be consumed in reduced amounts. Cadmium has always been in the land and in the animals. For information on how much organ meat is recommended, please contact the Yukon Contaminants Committee.

Fish

All Yukon fish are safe to eat and very good for your health.

World-wide levels of contaminants such as DDT and PCBs have declined and so have levels in Yukon fish. Lake Trout live a long time. As the trout get older and larger, they accumulate mercury, so it is better to eat several small, young fish than one larger and much older trout.

Plants, berries and mushrooms

Traditional plants collected for food or medicine in Yukon are safe to eat.

Common sense tells us not to collect these things where they might have been affected by human activities like mining. Materials removed from deep in the earth, or blown on the wind from mining operations, can contaminate plants in small areas nearby.

Small Game and Birds

In Yukon, small game and birds are safe to eat.

Small game and birds form part of a healthy Northern diet.