

## Whitefish is Good for Us!

Lake Whitefish are found throughout mainland Northwest Territories in lakes and rivers. They have a narrow, silver body. Larger fish develop a distinct hump behind their head. Lake Whitefish have a light, sweet flavour. (Whitefish, like most other fish species, often contain some mercury). Mercury is a heavy metal contaminant that can build up in the organs and in the meat. Whitefish eat plankton,



and insects. Whitefish do not eat other fish. Fish that do not eat other fish tend to have lower levels of mercury.

Lake Whitefish is an excellent source of protein. Protein is needed to build and repair all parts of the body. It is also a source of healthy fats, called omega-3 fatty acids, and provides more than most other fish species in the North. These fats help to keep the heart healthy and are good for brain development. Whitefish is also rich in selenium. Selenium helps to protect the body from damage that occurs over time, called oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is unavoidable and is a natural part of how the body works, which is why we need this important mineral.

## Whitefish Eggs

Whitefish eggs are usually harvested by jigging in the open river or by ice fishing in the winter. Salmon or char eggs are used to lure the whitefish, which usually end up stealing the eggs from the "J" hook. You need eggs to get their eggs!

## Food Fact

Only catch enough whitefish to last you through the winter. Use or preserve every part of the fish that is edible. Fish are easy to spoil,

especially the white fish. Take care of the fish as soon as they are caught.

"If we are lazy and idle, food won't come to us".

- Elder

## Is Whitefish Safe to Eat?

Yes! Whitefish are safe to eat. They are also some of the healthiest foods available. The benefits of consuming whitefish are much greater than the risks of contaminant exposure.

**Preparation:** Whitefish have delicious, white, flaky, mild tasting flesh. They can be eaten in a wide variety of ways depending on how fat they are; raw, half dried, dried; cooked rare or well done; cooked in most fish recipes, roasted over the fire, eaten frozen, fermented, or boiled whitefish is also used in agutak.



