**Whirling Disease:**

**Information for anglers & recreational boaters and paddlers**

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**How does Whirling disease spread?**

* People can spread Whirling disease by moving any of the following:
	+ infected live or dead finfish or fish parts
	+ infected worms
	+ contaminated gear and equipment used for activities such as swimming, paddling, boating, water pumping, or fishing (e.g. boats, fishing gear, nets etc.)
	+ contaminated water, aquatic plants and soil or mud
* It can also be spread by the movement of pets

**How can you help prevent the spread of Whirling disease?**

* Best practices for preventing the spread of Whirling disease can be found at the [Province of British Columbia – Whirling Disease](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/aquatic-species/aquatic-invasives/whirling-disease).
* Early detection of Whirling disease is very important. The included Whirling Disease 101 sheet provides pictures and what signs to look out for. If you see fish with signs, please contact your [local CFIA Animal Health Office](https://inspection.canada.ca/eng/1300462382369/1365216058692).
* The public should avoid transporting any of the items listed above from one body of water to another and clean equipment between uses.
* If you are fishing, boating or paddling, it is important to follow measures to prevent the spread of Whirling disease. This includes the measures above, as well as:
	+ Cleaning, draining and drying your watercraft and equipment prior to moving to another water body
	+ Washing and disinfecting the footwear you wore
	+ Washing your clothing thoroughly and drying it at a high temperature
* Although Whirling disease has been found in parts of Alberta and British Columbia, it is still very important to follow these measures to prevent further disease spread between waterbodies where Whirling disease is known to occur. This helps to keep the level of the parasite low to help reduce the impact on finfish.

**Can the parasite that causes Whirling disease be eliminated?**

There is no treatment for Whirling disease in fish. The elimination of the parasite in wild finfish populations is not possible.

**Is there a health risk for humans or pets?**

No. The parasite that causes Whirling disease does not affect humans or animals other than trout and salmon. There is no risk associated with swimming or eating fish caught from infected waters.

**Additional resources:**

* More information on [Whirling disease precautions](https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/aquatic-animals/diseases/reportable-diseases/whirling-disease/fact-sheet/eng/1336686597267/1336686806593) can be found on the CFIA web site.
* The Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Parks Canada and the Government of British Columbia will also share in managing this disease within British Columbia.
	+ [Parks Canada (Banff National Park) – Whirling Disease](https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/banff/nature/conservation/aquatics/restoring/lac-johnson-lake)
	+ [British Columbia – Environmental protection and sustainability – Whirling Disease](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/aquatic-species/aquatic-invasives/whirling-disease)
	+ [British Columbia - Reportable and notifiable diseases](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/reportable-notifiable-diseases?keyword=reportable&keyword=diseases)