

Safely Eating Fish - Shopper's Guide

This information is adapted from PSR's Health Fish and Healthy Families brochure, except Wild-caught Salmon information which is from Cal/EPA/OEHHA. For more information, visit www.mercuryaction.org.

Clip and save this **WALLET CARD** for use in grocery stores and restaurants.

Fish are listed here from the lowest to the highest mercury level, except salmon, which are treated separately in the inset box. Other fatty fish that may contain PCBs or other non-mercury pollutants are marked with a ✱. Fish that have rarely been tested are marked with a †.

Seafood that has been over-harvested is marked with a ✱. We advise limiting your consumption of these fish to allow their populations to recover.

Clip this wallet card, fold it twice, where indicated, and consult it when grocery shopping or dining out.

PSR/ARHP Guide to Healthy Fish	
Enjoy up to 2 servings each week	<p>LOWEST MERCURY LEVELS</p> <p>‡ Clams † Oysters † Shrimp Tilapia Sardines Crawfish Haddock Trout (freshwater)</p> <p>✱ Herring Catfish Flatfish (includes flounder and sole) Mackerel (Atlantic) Scallops Crab (Blue, King, and Snow) Pollock Shad (American) Squid Tuna (canned chunk light) Lobster (spiny) Mackerel Chub (Pacific) Cod Perch (Freshwater) Skate Halibut Mackerel – Spanish (S. Atlantic) Monkfish Snapper Weakfish (Sea Trout) Bass (saltwater; includes sea bass/striped bass/rockfish)</p> <p>KEY</p> <p>✱ contain PCBs or other pollutants † rarely tested for mercury ✱ overfished</p>
	<p>Remember to check local and state fish advisories.</p>
	<p>FOLD</p>
	<p>Farm raised Salmon contains higher levels of PCBs and many other persistent chemical pollutants.</p>
	<p>Operations located near wild salmon habitat can transfer diseases to wild fish.</p>
	<p>1 serving a week</p> <p>✱ Lobster (Northern/American) ✱ Bluefish Tuna (canned, white albacore) Tuna (fresh/frozen) Mackerel – Spanish (Gulf of Mexico) Marlin ✱ Orange Roughy ✱ Grouper</p>
	<p>Salmon</p> <p>Salmon – canned Pacific: 2 servings/week ✱ – wild/Pacific (fresh/frozen): 2 servings/month ✱ – farmed/Atlantic (fresh/frozen): 1 serving every 2 months</p>
	<p>✱ Mackerel – King (Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico) ✱ Shark ✱ Swordfish ✱ Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)</p>
	<p>HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS</p>

Chunk light Tuna Question:

Regardless of above FDA guidelines, Consumer Reports believes **pregnant women should not eat any canned tuna.** A small amount of canned Chunklight tuna contain other tuna varieties with higher mercury levels. Instead try canned Wild Alaskan Salmon or lessen your portion size.

Information & Advisories

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHA)

Safe eating guidelines: advisories & fish consumption benefits

<http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National fish consumption advice for women of childbearing age and children

www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advisory.html

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

800-SAFEFOOD

www.sfsan.fda.gov/seafood1.html

Environmental Health Investigations Branch Ca. Dept. of Health Services

<http://www.ehib.org>

Physician for Social Responsibility

Safe eating pocket guide and fact sheets

<http://www.mercuryaction.org>

Cal EPA Dept. of Toxics Substances Control

<http://dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Mercury/index.cfm>

If you find toxins in your home contact:

1-800-CLEANUP (1-800-253-2687)

<http://ccelearn.csus.edu/mercurylamp/content/resources5.htm>

Or <http://www.earth911.org>

For more information or to find out how you can get involved contact:



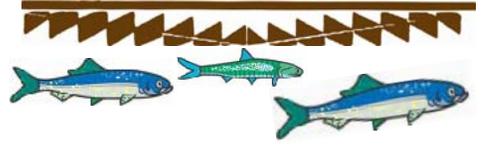
PO Box 2128, Berkeley, CA. 94702
 (510) 848-2043
www.cieaweb.org • info@cieaweb.org

Revised 6/20/08



Eating Fish Safely

Choices today for our Future Generations



Information to avoid mercury toxins for:

- Pregnant Mothers
- Nursing Mothers
- Children 17 and Under
- Women planning to become pregnant.

Fish are nutritious, good for you and part of many of our peoples' cultures and traditional diets.

By making safe choices you eat fish safely, avoiding fish that can harm you, your developing baby, nursing infants and children.





Balance the health benefits of fish

Mercury is a neurotoxin, damaging the brain, central nervous system, immune system, kidneys and heart and is especially damaging to developing infants and children.

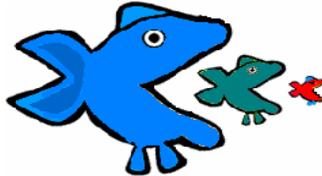


Fish are an important source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential to human health for proper development and maintenance of the brain, nervous system and cells of developing fetus, babies, children and adults. Omega-3's also protect against heart disease and stroke.

Mercury: Toxic in the Body

- In pregnant women, mercury crosses the placenta and enters the blood of a developing fetus. During breastfeeding, small amounts enter infants through breast milk.
- Children can be affected by mercury in fish during all growth years (birth through teenage years).
- Pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant? Mercury stays in the human body for about 1 year. Teenage girls and women in their childbearing years should follow the advice in this brochure.
- If you feel you, your baby or your child may be at risk, talk to your doctor.

How does Mercury get into Fish?



Mercury was used during the Gold Rush to extract gold. It is estimated that 10-11 million pounds or more was lost into California lakes, streams, rivers and bays.

Small organisms and fish eat particles of it and as it goes up the food chain the levels increase with each larger and older fish.

Tribal and Community-based organizations are working with Agencies to find solutions and push for cleanup. Contact CIEA to find out more and to get involved!

To Protect Your Baby & Family

- **Do the math. Advisories are based on meals of a 6 oz. serving for a 151lb. adult.** 6 oz. is roughly the size of two packs of cards. You can visit a mercury calculator website such as www.mercurycalculator@gotmercury.org. Always check their listed levels against those listed at FDA and OEHHA websites below.

Eating wild-caught fish?



- Some kinds of fish and locations are safer than others so **Check local warnings for the area where fish are caught.** Certain lakes and rivers in California have health advisories, which can be found at OEHHA <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/>
- Avoid fish with high levels of mercury. Avoid large predatory fish. Eat smaller younger fish which generally contain less mercury. The exception are wild river-caught Salmon that have naturally low levels of mercury. At this time, in California and Oregon these Salmon are endangered.
- If there are no local health advisories in your area, follow recommendations in this brochure, the PSR website www.mercuryaction.org or at the FDA website: www.cfsan.fda.gov/~frf/sea-mehg.html.



Photos courtesy of the National Indian Justice Center (cover) and Seventh Generation Fund (salmon pictures).

More Tips for Safer Fish

- **Eat Alaskan wild river-caught salmon: naturally high in omega-3 fatty acids, low in mercury and PCBs, and best for the environment!** Salmon in lakes and reservoirs have higher levels of mercury.



- Check advisories & advocate for salmon habitat protection!
- If pregnant, avoid raw fish, like sushi, or raw shellfish, like uncooked oysters and shrimp. Cook fish until it flakes with a fork.
- Mercury is stored in entire fish. You cannot see mercury and you cannot clean the head guts, fat and skin to get rid of it. But, other toxins, like PCBs may be stored there so trimming off these areas is still a good idea.
- To avoid these other toxins, remove or puncture the skin before cooking so fat can drain off
- Don't save drippings for reuse.

Other ways to Protect your Family from toxins

- If heated, Mercury will vaporize and can easily enter the body by breathing in the vapors. If spilled call Toxic Substances Control in your area. **DO NOT VACCUM IT.** This will cause it to turn to vapor.
- Replace mercury thermometers with digital ones.
- Firewood, basketmaking materials or food gathered near mercury laden sediments may contain mercury soil or dust. Secure access to safe gathering locations.
- Consider, sources of contaminants in all foods since there are likely to be cumulative risks. As always, limit your families exposure to pesticides, lead, plastics, asbestos serpentine), chlorine, arsenic and other toxins.