

**Nordenberg, Tamar**

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**From:** Carson, Louis J  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2001 9:42 AM  
**To:** Bolger, Philip M; Spiller, Philip C; Lake, Lloyd R; Carnevale, Catherine W; Brewer, Camille E; Wilms, Heinz G; Nordenberg, Tamar; Davidson, Marjorie L  
**Subject:** FW: ANZFA ISSUES ADVISORY STATEMENT ON MERCURY IN FISH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Methylmercury

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Hammett, Cynthia A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2001 9:41 AM  
**To:** Carson, Louis J  
**Subject:** FW: ANZFA ISSUES ADVISORY STATEMENT ON MERCURY IN FISH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Acting BLT PAS  
**To:** Hammett, Cynthia A  
**Sent:** 1/23/01 9:15 AM  
**Subject:** FW: ANZFA ISSUES ADVISORY STATEMENT ON MERCURY IN FISH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

> -----Original Message-----

>**From:** Veek, Marilyn  
>**Sent:** Friday, January 19, 2001 12:17 PM  
>**To:** Cooper, Charles W; Snyder, Mary I (CFSAN); Welch, Ruth A; Ho, Julia L; ORA Public Affairs Liaisons; ORA Public Affairs Specialists  
>**Subject:** ANZFA ISSUES ADVISORY STATEMENT ON MERCURY IN FISH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

>

>18 January 2001

>ANZFA ISSUES ADVISORY STATEMENT ON MERCURY IN FISH FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

>The Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) today released an advisory statement on mercury in fish for pregnant women, and women considering pregnancy. ANZFA is recommending that pregnant women limit the consumption of shark (flake), ray, swordfish, barramundi, gemfish, orange roughy, ling, southern bluefin tuna and freshwater fish caught in geothermal waters to four serves (of 150g) per week.

>ANZFA's Chief Scientist, Dr Marion Healy, said 'Fish is an excellent source of protein for all people, it is low in saturated fats and high in the 'good' unsaturated fat and omega 3 oils and women should continue to eat fish during pregnancy. However, some species of fish, usually those large species that are at the top of the food chain and that live a long time, may accumulate higher levels of mercury that can affect the foetus. The amount of mercury in the environment also affects the level in fish, for example, the freshwater fish living in geothermal waters in New Zealand tend to accumulate higher levels. Pregnant women can eat as much other fish, including canned tuna, as they like. Canned tuna contains lower levels of mercury than bluefin tuna because a smaller species is used that is usually harvested when less than a year old.

>'ANZFA has consulted widely with the fishing industry and health

>professionals and will continue to work with these groups to ensure  
>that pregnant women, and women considering having a baby, are made  
>aware of this advice. ANZFA developed the advisory statement for women  
>based on the latest research that indicates that the foetus is  
>sensitive to mercury. The effects in infants are subtle and only found  
>by testing, for example, delays in the start of walking and talking.  
>Very little mercury is found in breast milk and breastfeeding mothers  
>should not limit their fish intake.  
>'Current food regulations limit the level of mercury in fish and these  
>limits ensure that the general population, including babies and  
>children, are not exposed to any harmful effects. National Nutrition  
>Surveys show that 25% of Australians and 20% of New Zealanders (this  
>can be as high as 36% of Maori and Pacific islander groups) consume  
>fish at least once a week. However, the vast majority of people consume  
>less than 4 portions of fish a week'.  
>'It is highly desirable that people not interpret this as advice to  
>stop or reduce their consumption of fish. It is in the interests of  
>their health to eat fish on a regular basis, but pregnant women should  
>limit consumption to those species of fish with high mercury levels,'  
>Dr Healy concluded.  
>More information can be found on ANZFA's website [www.anzfa.gov.au](http://www.anzfa.gov.au) or  
>[www.anzfa.govt.nz](http://www.anzfa.govt.nz).  
>Media contact: Lydia Buchtman, ANZFA  
>    Australia (02) 6271 2620 or 0411 268 525 mobile  
>    From New Zealand 0061 2 6271 2620 or 0061 411 268 525  
>(COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ADVISORY STATEMENT IS AVAILABLE AT  
><http://203.55.94.175/documents/fs056.asp>)