



Fish Facts

PRINT-AND-GO GUIDE

Fish Facts for Pregnant and Nursing Moms and for Women Who May Become Pregnant

womenshealth.gov

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Fish and shellfish can be an important part of a healthy diet. They are a great source of protein and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

But almost all fish and shellfish contain some mercury. Mercury is a metal that can harm the brain of your unborn baby — even before it is conceived.

Mercury mainly gets into our bodies by the fish we eat. Only high levels of this metal seem to be harmful to developing babies. So the risk of mercury in fish and shellfish depends on the amount and type you eat.

Women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant should steer clear of fish with high levels of mercury. But removing all fish from your diet will rob you of important omega-3 fatty acids. So how can you reap the benefits of eating fish without the dangers of mercury? Follow these tips.

Don't eat:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swordfish • Tilefish • King mackerel • Shark • Raw or uncooked fish or shellfish (e.g. clams, oysters, scallops) • Refrigerated uncooked seafood (labeled nova-style, lox, kippered, smoked, or jerky)
Eat up to 1 serving (6 ounces) per week:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuna steaks • Canned albacore or chunk white tuna • Halibut • Snapper



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<p>Eat up to 2 servings (12 ounces) per week:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shrimp, crab, clams, oysters, scallops • Canned light tuna • Salmon • Pollock • Catfish • Cod
<p>Check before eating fish caught in local waters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State health departments have guidelines on fish from local waters. Or get local fish advisories at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency web site (http://www.epa.gov). • If you're unsure about the safety of a fish from local waters, only eat 6 ounces per week and don't eat any other fish that week.
<p>Eat a variety of small, young non-fatty fish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your fishmonger to recommend lean, small fish that are caught young.

SOURCE: U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

For a listing of mercury levels in fish, go to the Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety web site at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov>.

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