



Fish are good for you but... NOT fish high in mercury and PCBs.

Fish are high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids - both important nutrients for you and your developing baby. But some fish are contaminated with pollutants like mercury and PCBs, and can harm your baby's developing brain and nervous system.

To gain the nutritional benefits of fish, and avoid the potential harm of eating too much mercury, PCBs, or other pollutants, pregnant women or women who may become pregnant, nursing women, teen girls, and children younger than 12 should follow these guidelines:

DO:

• **Do eat up to two 6 ounce servings per week of healthy fish and seafood.** Children, depending on their size, can eat one to two 2-3 ounce servings per week. These include:

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| • anchovies | • cod | • pollock |
| • farmed catfish | • crawfish | • sardines |
| • crab (blue, king, and snow) | • croaker | • scallops |
| • canned chunk light tuna | • flounder | • shad |
| • mahi mahi | • haddock | • shrimp |
| • perch (freshwater) | • halibut | • sole |
| • squid (calamari) | • monkfish | • tilapia |
| • farmed raised trout | | |

For additional guidance or if the fish that you like are not listed here, go to the websites listed on the reverse side.

Fish sticks and fillets used in fast food sandwiches are also safe to eat because they are made from fish that are low in mercury.

• **When making decisions about canned and vacuum-packed tunafish, choose chunk light** instead of white or chunk white albacore tuna. Chunk light comes from a smaller fish and tends to have less mercury than white or chunk white albacore. One small can is equal to one 6 ounce serving.



• **Choose wild or canned¹ salmon** over farmed salmon. Farmed salmon may be high in PCBs.

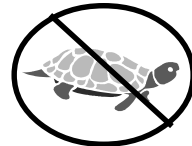
DO NOT:

• **Do not eat** tuna steak, sword fish, king mackerel, tilefish (also known as golden bass or golden snapper), shark, lobster tomalley², or any bluefish caught off the Massachusetts coast. Orange roughy, marlin, and grouper may also contain concerning amounts of pollutants.

• **Do not eat** freshwater fish caught in streams, rivers, lakes and ponds in Massachusetts.³



• **Do not eat** fish, frogs, turtles and ducks from the Housatonic River, Goodrich Pond, Silver Lake, Wood's Pond and Rising Pond.



• **Do not eat** lobster, flounder, softshell crabs, or bivalves from **Boston Harbor**.

• **Do not eat** lobster, fish or shellfish from New **Bedford Harbor**.

¹ Canned salmon is usually wild salmon, but because it is not a fillet, it tends to be much less expensive.

² Lobster tomalley is the soft green substance found in the tail and body section of the lobster.

³ This Freshwater Fish Advisory does not apply to fish stocked in freshwater bodies by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife or farm-raised freshwater fish sold commercially. For additional guidance call the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, 413-447-9789.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How does mercury get into fish?**

Mercury is released into our air through the burning of fossil fuels, especially coal, and the burning of mercury-containing trash. This mercury falls back to the earth in rain or snow and ends up in our lakes, ponds, rivers, and oceans where it is eaten by fish. The mercury becomes concentrated in the flesh/muscle of the fish. Generally speaking, the older and larger the fish is, the more mercury it will have.

Conserving energy, using clean sources of energy like solar and wind, and being careful about where you put mercury-containing trash will help lower mercury levels in fish and make them safer to eat.

- **How do PCBs get into fish?**

PCBs used to be used in electrical equipment and were banned in the United States in 1977 due to concerns about health effects. But, because they break down very slowly, they are still present in our water and soil. PCBs can build up in the fat of the fish.

- **Does it matter how I cook the fish?**

You can lower your exposure to PCBs by trimming fatty areas (belly, top of the back, and dark meat) before cooking. Broil, grill, roast or steam fish on a rack to allow fat to drain and then throw away fat drippings. Avoid frying.

Preparing fish differently will not reduce mercury exposure as mercury is found in the flesh of the fish.

- **What about fish oil supplements? Are they safe to take?**

Many people take fish oil supplements as a way of increasing their dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids. Supplements, though, may contain mercury, PCBs and other pollutants, and it is important to make sure that they have been tested by an independent lab. We recommend that you check with your health care provider before starting.

- **Are there ways to get omega-3 fatty acids besides eating fish?**

Yes. Some of the foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids are: Ground flax seeds, flax seed oil, walnuts, soybeans (e.g. edamame or tofu), dark green leafy vegetables, cauliflower, squash, omega-3 enriched eggs, grass fed beef, and milk and cheese made from grass-fed cows.

For more information about healthy fish and seafood:

www.mercuryaction.org – HealthyFish, Healthy Families Guidelines by Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

www.epa.gov/ostwater/fish/ - US Environmental Protection Agency local, state, and federal fish advisories

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/index.asp> – NRDC Mercury Protection Toolbox, including a mercury calculator and wallet hand guides.

<http://www.mass.gov> – Mass DPH: To find advisories and guides to eating healthy fish in Massachusetts, search: **Fish Consumption Advisories**