

Store Bought Fish Consumption Advice for Women & Children

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or could become pregnant, you can still enjoy the benefits of eating fish if you choose carefully and eat a variety of fish.

Is fish good for me?

Yes. It is an excellent source of protein and many other nutrients. Fish contains the omega-3 fats DHA and EPA. DHA helps the brain, eyes and nerves of the fetus and child develop. Pregnant or breastfeeding women, or women who could become pregnant, should eat fish to get DHA. EPA is an omega-3 fat that helps prevent heart disease.

Are there risks to eating fish?

Yes. Fish may contain mercury. Large fish that live a long time and eat other fish contain the most mercury, which builds up in the tissue of the fish. When we eat these fish, the mercury builds up in our bodies. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or could become pregnant, you should avoid or rarely eat fish that are high in mercury. The fetus and infants exposed to high levels of mercury may have problems with learning, walking and talking.

Can I safely eat fish?

Yes. Health Canada recommends eating at least two Canada's Food Guide Servings of fish each week that are high in omega-3 fats and low in mercury. One Canada's Food Guide Serving is 75 grams or 2.5 ounces or about half a cup.

Use this guide to help choose fish for you and your family. See attached chart for specific species of fish.

	Eat Often		Eat Sometimes			Avoid or Eat Rarely
	Very Low	Low	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3	
Men teenage boys women over 50	Safe to eat every day	Safe to eat everyday	4 servings per week	4 servings per week	4 servings per week	No more than 1 serving per week
Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are breastfeeding	14 servings per week	4 servings per week	2 servings per week	1 serving per week	½ serving per week	Less than 1 serving per month
Children 1 to 4 years old	7 servings per week	2 servings per week	1 serving per week	½ serving per week	¼ serving per week	Less than 1 serving per month

Babies less than 12 months of age can follow the consumption advice for young children, but should eat a smaller serving size.

Older children 5 to 15 years of age can follow the consumption advice for young children, but they can eat a larger serving size.

What about canned tuna?

There are different types of canned tuna. Read the label and choose **"light" tuna** because it is low in mercury. Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are breastfeeding can safely eat 4 food guide servings per week (approx **2.5 cans per week**) of canned "light" tuna.

Choose **"white" or Albacore tuna** less often as it is higher than mercury. Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are breastfeeding should eat **no more than 1 can per month**.

What about salmon?

Salmon is a fish that provides a lot of omega-3 fats and is low in mercury. However, there are some concerns:

- low levels of other pollutants, such as PCBs, found in the fat of farmed salmon
- transfer of disease and parasites from farmed to local wild salmon
- pollution and waste from salmon farms
- stress on fish stocks used to feed farmed salmon

Wild salmon is lower in PCBs and has fewer ecological concerns than farmed salmon. Most canned salmon is wild. To lower the amount of pollutants in salmon, remove the fat and skin before cooking. Grill, broil or barbecue your fish so that the extra fat can drip off.

What about raw fish?

Health Canada recommends that pregnant women avoid eating raw fish and raw shellfish. They may carry bacteria that can cause serious illness.

Can I eat sport fish?

Sport fish are fish caught in local lakes and rivers. Some of these fish may not be safe to eat. If you eat sport fish, check the Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/> or phone 1-800-820-2716 to get a free copy.

What about the environmental impact of eating fish?

Poor fisheries management can result in habitat damage, threats to other aquatic life and overfishing. For more information on making the best environmental fish choices refer to www.seachoice.org.

I am pregnant and I don't eat fish. Should I take an omega-3 fish oil supplement?

It is not known how much you would need to take to help the development of the fetus. If you choose to take supplements, read the label carefully. Look for those that say they have been tested for contaminants. You may also look for omega-3 supplements that are made from marine plant sources. Fish liver oil contains high levels of Vitamin A which may cause birth defects.

Eat Often			
Very Low	Low		
Child: 7 servings per week Women: 14 servings per week	Child: 2 servings per week Women: 4 servings per week		
Basa Capelin Kamaboko (fish cake; processed white fish) Octopus Oyster Pollock, Alaskan Salmon (Chum, Coho, Pink) Sea Cucumber Sea Urchin	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> Anchovies Clam Cockle (Greenland) Cod Flounder Haddock Hake (White) Herring </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> Rockfish Salmon (Atlantic, Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead) Sardines Scallops Shrimp Shad (American) </td> </tr> </table>	Anchovies Clam Cockle (Greenland) Cod Flounder Haddock Hake (White) Herring	Rockfish Salmon (Atlantic, Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead) Sardines Scallops Shrimp Shad (American)
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Tilapia	Lingcod Mackerel (Atlantic) Mussel, Blue Periwinkle Plaice (Canadian) Prawn Quahog (Hardshell Clam)	Smelt (Atlantic, Lake) Snapper Sole (Dover, Petrale) Squid Trout (Rainbow) Tongol Tuna (canned) Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack, yellowfin) Whelk
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Eat Sometimes		
Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3
<p>Child: 1 servings per week Women: 2 servings per week</p> <p>Arctic Char Bullhead (Brown) Carp Catfish Crab Crawfish Croaker Jack (Blue runner, Crevalle, Common) Lobster Maria (Burbot, Ling) Monkfish Mullet (Common) Perch (White, Yellow) Pumpkinseed Skate Sturgeon (Lake, White) Turbot Tilefish (Atlantic) Whitefish (Lake)</p>	<p>Child: ½ serving per week (2 servings per month) Women: 1 serving per week (4 servings per month)</p> <p>Amberjacks Drum (Freshwater) Eel (American, Conger, sea spiny, spotted) Kingfish (Spanish, King Mackerel) Mahi Mahi (Dolphin Fish) Pike Redfish Trout, Lake Trout Wahoo Whiting</p>	<p>Child: ¼ serving per week (1 serving per month) Women: ½ serving per week (2 servings per month)</p> <p>Albacore Tuna (canned) Cusk (Brismark, Moonfish) Grouper Halibut Sauger Tuna steak (skipjack, southern bluefin, yellowfin) Walleye (Yellow Pickerel)</p>

Avoid or Eat Rarely	
<p>Barracuda Escolar (Snake Mackerel) Marlin Orange Roughy Sablefish (Black cod)</p>	<p>Sea Bass (Chilean seabass) Shark (Spiny Dogfish / Northern Shark, Porbeagle) Swordfish Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico) Tuna steak (various species)</p>