

Mercury and Fish

HIGHEST MERCURY	HIGH MERCURY	LOWER MERCURY	LOWEST MERCURY
<i>Avoid eating</i>	<i>Eat no more than three 6-ounce servings per month</i>	<i>Eat no more than six 6-ounce servings per month</i>	<i>Enjoy these fish</i>
Grouper*	Bass (saltwater)*	Carp	Anchovies
Marlin*	Croaker	Mahi Mahi	Butterfish
Orange roughy*	Halibut*	Crab (dungeness)	Calamari (squid)
Tilefish *	Tuna (canned, white albacore)	Snapper*	Caviar (farmed)
Swordfish	Tuna (fresh bluefin, ahi)	Crab (blue)	Crab (king)*
Shark *	Sea trout	Herring	Pollock
Mackerel (king)	Bluefish	Crab (snow)	Catfish
	Lobster (American/Maine)	Monkfish*	Whitefish
		Perch (freshwater)	Perch (ocean)
		Skate	Scallops
		Cod*	Flounder*
		Tuna (canned, chunk light)	Haddock*
		Tuna (fresh Pacific albacore)	Hake
			Herring
			Lobster (spiny/rock)
			Shad
			Sole
			Crawfish/crayfish
			Salmon**
			Shrimp*
			Clams
			Tilapia
			Oysters
			Sardines
			Sturgeon (farmed)
			Trout (freshwater)

* **Fish to avoid for reasons other than mercury:** Fish and other types of seafood are marked with an asterisk above if any of their populations are depleted due to overfishing or if the methods used to catch them are especially damaging to other sea life or ocean habitats. To learn more, see the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) and the [Blue Ocean Institute](#), both of which provide guides to fish to enjoy or avoid on the basis of environmental factors.

** **Salmon:** Farmed salmon may contain PCBs, manufactured chemicals with serious long-term health effects. (PCBs were banned in the U.S. in the 1970s but remain in the environment.)

The fish listed are in descending order, so those at the bottom of each category are lower in mercury than those at the top.

Print out a handy wallet card of the above list at
<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/walletcard.pdf>

This list applies to fish caught and sold commercially. For information about fish caught by family, friends or yourself check [advisories](#) for the Bay Area and California at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html>

Should I stop eating fish? No. Fish is a healthy source of protein and other nutrients including omega-3 fatty acids. Keep eating fish, but learn what types and how much fish is safer to eat.

Tips to lower mercury from the fish you eat:

Eat different kinds of fish (especially from the lowest mercury column).

Do not eat the guts of the fish.

Eat smaller fish rather than larger fish because they usually have less mercury.

If you eat more than the recommended amount of fish in a week, then eat less than the recommended amount the next week.

Of note – cleaning and cooking of the fish does not get rid of the mercury. Be sure to follow the guidelines.

Serving sizes:

1 adult serving is 6 ounces of cooked fish or 1/2 pound (8 ounces) of uncooked fish.

A 6-ounce serving of fish is the size of 2 decks of cards.

Children should eat smaller servings. A 40-pound child's serving is about 2 ounces.

Tuna Amount (canned light tuna as has lowest mercury amount, not albacore/solid white)

Adults – 6 ounces of canned light tuna per week

Children – 1 ounce canned light tuna per 20-pound body weight per week

Mercury in sushi:

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/sushi.asp>

Other toxins in fish include PCBs and Dioxins. These can be reduced by trimming fat and cooking by broiling, baking or grilling to let the fat drip away.

References:

1. This handout adapted from: <http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/guide.asp>

(Sources for NRDC's guide: The data for this guide to mercury in fish comes from two federal agencies: the Food and Drug Information, which tests fish for mercury, and the Environmental Protection Agency, which determines mercury levels that it considers safe for women of childbearing age.)

2. Also adapted from Environmental Health Investigations Branch handout www.ehib.org

3. http://www.checnet.org/healthehouse/education/checlist-detail-print.asp?Main_ID=716