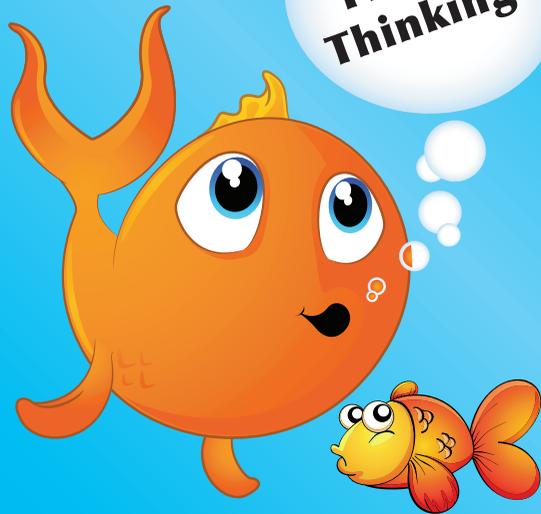


# A Cautious Consumer's Guide for Safer Seafood Consumption

for Moms, Moms-to-Be and Young Children



**Fishful Thinking!**



## GO FISH!

Seafood can serve as a low-fat and nutrient-rich source of protein, but certain fish contain dangerously high amounts of mercury.

HBCAC developed this easy to understand guide to seafood consumption for young children, pregnant or nursing mothers, and women who may become pregnant.

## FISH FACTS

Seafood provides iodine, vitamin D, selenium, and Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s have been proven to lower blood cholesterol, and reduce risk of heart attack and stroke.



Eating fish and other foods rich in Omega-3s during pregnancy can lead to increased cognitive function in children while insufficient consumption during pregnancy can lead to your baby having cognitive complications.

## A LITTLE FISHY?

With all of the benefits, the FDA and the EPA recommend that most Americans consume limited amounts of fish. However, since it is well documented that most seafood contains at least some level of mercury, the confusion of what is healthy or too dangerous leaves consumers scratching their heads...

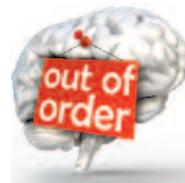
### “What fish should I buy and how much is safe to eat?”

It all depends on your age, pregnancy status, and health. Some of the most popular fish choices - canned albacore tuna, swordfish and select sushi fish - pose a significant risk of mercury exposure if eaten too frequently.

### What is the average consumer to do?

## WHY SHOULD I WORRY?

Mercury can affect the nervous system, brain function and development, kidneys, and the heart. It is especially dangerous for fetuses and babies.



Prenatal mercury exposure when the central nervous system is developing leads to permanent damage and learning problems later on - loss of IQ points, decreased proficiency in memory, attention, language, and spatial cognition. Because mercury can linger in the body and pass through breast milk, nursing mothers should be cautious with their fish consumption.

## EDUCATE BEFORE YOU EAT!

While the FDA and EPA recommend 8 to 10 ounces of fish per week for adults, based on “safe” mercury limits determined by body weight, they suggest that pregnant women and children consume even less.



HBCAC and other health and consumer protection organizations like the Environmental Working Group (EWG) believe the recommendations are not strict enough and take a more cautious approach to weekly limits. Since trace exposure to mercury can be a significant risk to children, we have opted to follow the more restrictive recommendations here, where the ounces of fish per week may vary depending upon which fish you choose.

## HOW DO FISH ACCUMULATE MERCURY?

Mercury concentrations vary depending on the fish's age, diet, and region of harvest. Mercury is released from coal-fired power plants and waste incinerators into fish habitats. Other harmful chemicals come from consumer and industrial pollution, and contaminated water runoff. As small fish absorb mercury from the water, they become a contaminated food source for larger fish.

## Safer Seafood Consumption: A Quick Reference Chart for Adults

6 oz. Serving Size	100 lb Adult	150 lb Adult
	Point Value	Point Value
<b>Anchovies</b>	1	1
<b>Arctic Char</b>	1	1
<b>Bass, Striped</b>	1	1
<b>Clams</b>	1	1
<b>Crab, Blue</b>	1	1
<b>Flounder</b>	1	1
<b>Haddock</b>	1	1
<b>Herring</b>	1	1
<b>Mussels</b>	1	1
<b>Oysters</b>	1	1
<b>Perch, Ocean</b>	1	1
<b>Salmon, All Species</b>	1	1
<b>Sardines</b>	1	1
<b>Scallops</b>	1	1
<b>Shrimp</b>	1	1
<b>Tilapia</b>	1	1
<b>Catfish, Channel</b>	2	1
<b>Sole</b>	2	1
<b>Squid</b>	2	1
<b>Whitefish</b>	2	1
<b>Cod, Alaskan</b>	2	2
<b>Trout, Rainbow</b>	2	2
<b>Hallbut</b>	3+	3
<b>Lobster, Maine</b>	3+	3
<b>Bluefish</b>	3+	3+
<b>*Swordfish</b>	3+	3+
<b>*Tuna (All) Including: Ahl/Albacore/Chunk Light</b>	3+	3+

\*These fish are on the “Do Not Eat” list and are included for comparison only.

## HOW TO USE THESE CHARTS:

We recommend a maximum of 3 points per week.  
**Each week you may choose:**

- 1 serving of a 3-point fish OR**
- 1 serving each of a 2-point plus a 1-point fish OR**
- 3 servings of a 1-point fish**

Point values have been adjusted accordingly and are based on 6-oz serving sizes for adults and 3-oz. serving sizes for children (on reverse).

## Safer Seafood Consumption: A Quick Reference Chart for Children

BEST

FAIR

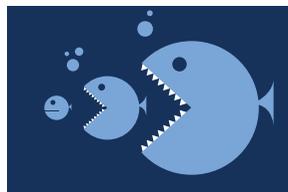
WORST

3 oz. Serving Size	25 lb Child	50 lb Child
	Point Value	Point Value
Clams	1	1
Mussels	1	1
Oysters	1	1
Perch, Ocean	1	1
Salmon, All Species	1	1
Sardines	1	1
Shrimp	1	1
Tilapia	1	1
Anchovies	2	1
Arctic Char	2	1
Bass, Striped	2	1
Flounder	2	1
Haddock	2	1
Herring	2	1
Scallops	2	1
Catfish, Channel	3	2
Squid	3	2
Whitefish	3	2
Cod, Alaskan	3+	2
Sole	3+	2
Trout, Rainbow	3+	2
Crab, Blue	3+	3
Bluefish	3+	3+
Halibut	3+	3+
Lobster, Maine	3+	3+
*Swordfish	3+	3+
*Tuna (All) including: Ahi/Albacore/Chunk Light	3+	3+

\*These fish are on the "Do Not Eat" list and are included for comparison only.

### BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Mercury pollution enters the ocean's food web and becomes concentrated as it accumulates up the food chain. Large predatory fish like Sword-



fish, Shark and King Mackerel end up with the dangerously high levels of toxins. When it comes to choosing fish, think small!

### REELING IT IN

Recommendations for the groups at risk, identified by lower body weight, to minimize mercury consumption include:

- Consume smaller servings of fish from just a few species.
- Space out fish-containing meals.

### BEST AND WORST

#### Fish to Avoid

- King Mackerel
- Swordfish
- Shark
- Lobster
- Tuna
- Bluefish
- Halibut
- Blue Crab



#### Better Choices

- Shrimp
- Wild Salmon
- Mussels
- Clams
- Tilapia
- Oysters
- Perch
- Sardines



### OFF THE HOOK

It is not essential to consume fish, however we do need Omega-3 fatty acids (specifically the types "DHA" and "EPA"). Some fish species are being fished at unsustainable levels, so to avoid mercury exposure and protect fish species, Omega-3s can be obtained from alternative sources such as flax seeds, walnuts or egg yolks. Some fish oil supplements may be contaminated with toxins (mercury and PCBs), so choose fish oils from salmon or sardines.



Other harmful contaminants found in seafood include pesticides, industrial chemicals, dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Although wild salmon may contain a trace more mercury than farm-raised salmon, the farm-raised tends to contain more of these other harmful chemicals, making wild the smarter option.

### WHAT ABOUT THE FISH I CATCH LOCALLY?

Due to high levels of contaminants, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) recommends that the most vulnerable groups (women under 50 and children under 15) avoid eating seafood caught around Long Island. This includes waters listed below (alphabetical).

For more information about a specific body of water, visit: [www.health.ny.gov/environmental](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental)



- Atlantic Ocean/Long Island South
- Block Island Sound
- Freeport Reservoir
- Fresh Pond (Hither Hills)
- Gardiners Bay
- Grant Park Pond
- Hall's Pond
- Jamaica Bay
- Lake Capri
- Loft's Pond
- Long Island Sound
- Massapequa Reservoir, upstream of Long Island Railroad
- Peconic Bay
- Ridders Pond
- Smith Pond (Rockville Centre)
- Smith Pond (Roosevelt Park)
- Spring Lake (Middle Island)
- Upper Twin Pond
- Whitney Park Pond



Visit these sites to find out more:  
Health and Environment Tips/Facts:

[ewg.org](http://ewg.org)  
[seafoodwatch.org](http://seafoodwatch.org)  
[montereybayaquarium.org](http://montereybayaquarium.org)  
[nrdc.org](http://nrdc.org)

Government Regulations and Recommendations:

[dec.ny.gov](http://dec.ny.gov)  
[fda.gov](http://fda.gov)  
[epa.gov](http://epa.gov)



About HBCAC:  
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Point values are best estimates of mercury content, based on mercury levels computed by the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC)

"NRDC Mercury Calculator" (2015) found at:

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/calculator/calc.asp>  
Find the online version and our calculations at [preventionisthecure.org](http://preventionisthecure.org).

However, the fish you eat may contain varying mercury levels. Discuss any concerns about mercury consumption with your doctor.