

Mercury in Fish.

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Know About the Mercury Levels in Fish

Mercury Levels

We know that fish is very nutritious and packed with great nutrients such as omega-3, the B vitamins, and lean protein. Unfortunately, though, fish can also have some unhealthy contaminants. Mercury levels in fish probably present the greatest concern.



Mercury is a contaminant found in fish that can affect brain development and the nervous system. The FDA has guidelines for children, women who are pregnant, and women who are trying to become pregnant. These guidelines state you should consume no

more than 12 ounces of low-mercury fish weekly. Avoid highest-level-mercury fish and keep high-level-mercury fish to only three six-ounce servings per month.

What does this mean for women who are pregnant but also trying to get some of their much-needed nutrients from the critters of the sea? It's all about moderation. Recent information found in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* says that no one should eliminate fish out of the diet altogether. Fish contains too many healthy nutrients that are essential for growth and development, especially in a pregnant mom or baby. You should avoid four types of fish due to mercury levels. These include shark, king mackerel, swordfish, and tilefish.

For information regarding other types of fish, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has a list of fish and their mercury levels so that people can know what they're consuming. If you want to get more detailed information about mercury levels and how much you personally consume, you can also use the mercury thermometer to calculate your totals.

Mercury Levels in Fish

Highest Mercury

AVOID Eating

- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Tilefish
- Swordfish
- Shark
- Mackerel (king)
- Tuna (bigeye, Ahi)

High Mercury

Eat no more than three six-ounce servings per month.

- Sea Bass (Chilean)

- Bluefish
- Grouper
- Mackerel (Spanish, Gulf)
- Tuna (canned, white albacore) See tuna chart below
- Tuna (Yellowfin)

Lower Mercury

Eat no more than six six-ounce servings per month.

- Bass (striped, black)
- Carp
- Cod (Alaskan)
- Croaker (White Pacific)
- Halibut (Pacific and Atlantic), Jack smelt (Silverside)
- Lobster
- Mahi Mahi
- Monkfish
- Perch (freshwater)
- Sablefish
- Skate
- Snapper
- Sea trout (weakfish)
- Tuna (canned, chunk light)
- Tuna (skipjack)

Lowest Mercury

Enjoy two six-ounce servings per week.

- Anchovies
- Butterfish
- Catfish
- Clam
- Crab (Domestic)
- Crawfish/Crayfish
- Croaker
- Flounder
- Haddock

- Hake
- Herring
- Mackerel (North Atlantic, Chub)
- Mullet
- Oysters
- Perch (Ocean)
- Plaice
- Salmon (Canned, Fresh)
- Sardines
- Scallops
- Shad (American)
- Shrimp
- Sole
- Squid (Calamari)
- Tilapia
- Trout (Freshwater)
- Whitefish
- Whiting

(Chart from the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC); Data obtained by the FDA and the EPA)

Tuna mercury levels can differ based on the type of tuna and where it was caught. The NRDC created the chart below as a guideline to how much tuna children, pregnant women or women wanting to conceive can eat, based on their weight.

Weight in Pounds	Frequency	
	White Albacore	Chunk Light
20 lbs	1 Can/10 Weeks	1 Can/3 Weeks
30 lbs	1 Can/6 Weeks	1 Can/2 Weeks
40 lbs	1 Can/5 Weeks	1 Can/11 Days
50 lbs	1 Can/4 Weeks	1 Can/9 Days
60 lbs	1 Can/3 Weeks	1 Can/7 Days
70 lbs	1 Can/3 Weeks	1 Can/6 Days

80 lbs	1 Can/2 Weeks	1 Can/ 6 Days
90 lbs	1 can/2 Weeks	1 Can/5 Days
100 lbs	1 Can/2 Weeks	1 Can/5 Days
110 lbs	1 Can/12 Days	1 Can/4 Days
120 lbs	1 Can/11 Days	1 Can/4 Days
130 lbs	1 Can/10 Days	1 Can/4 Days
140 lbs	1 Can/10 Days	1 Can/3 Days
150 lbs +	1 Can/9 Days	1 Can/3 Days

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