

The Recommendations

Our results here are directed primarily at women of childbearing age, children, or people who eat a lot of fish (a pound and a half a week or more⁸). We have created a list of “Lowest Mercury Fish” that people in this vulnerable group can eat without concern for mercury, while getting the health benefits of eating fish. We have also created a second list of “Low Mercury Fish” that can be eaten frequently—several times a week—by these groups. We have factored environmental and sustainability considerations into these recommended lists. We have provided links to local advisories for additional information about other contaminants. We have also created a list of “Highest Mercury Fish,” which pregnant women, children, and people who eat fish regularly may wish to avoid or eat only occasionally.

Fish and Shellfish in General



LOWEST Mercury Fish (Sustainable)

A 132-pound person can safely eat 36 ounces per week.
A 44-pound child can safely eat 18 ounces per week.

- Wild & Alaska salmon—canned or fresh
- Shrimp—most wild and U.S. farmed
- Sardines
- Tilapia *
- Scallops **
- Oysters **
- Squid (calamari) *—domestic



LOW Mercury Fish (Sustainable)

A 132-pound person can safely eat up to 18 ounces per week.
A 44-pound child can safely eat up to 6 ounces per week.

- Haddock
- Pollock
- Flounder and sole (flatfish)
- Catfish * #
- Trout #
- Atlantic mackerel
- Atlantic croaker
- Mullet
- Crawfish—domestic
- Crab **

⁸You may want to consider country of origin and choose domestic rather than imported if possible.

** Always follow any local alerts regarding when shellfish can be safely harvested and eaten. Eating shellfish raw always carries additional risks of food-borne illness and is not recommended for vulnerable groups.

If wild caught (which includes being fished from local rivers and lakes), check with your state health department for information about PCBs especially for these fish, but it's a good idea to check for anything on the list if you are concerned about PCBs.

HIGHER Mercury Fish

A 132-pound person would exceed the EPA's “safe” mercury consumption level eating just 6 ounces per week and for some of these fish even less than that. One six ounce meal weekly is just half the total fish consumption the USDA recommends. One should therefore eat these fish only very infrequently. The FDA advises women of childbearing age and young children not to eat the highest mercury fish, marked with an X below, at all. The FDA is considering adding two more to its “do not eat” list, marked with **.

- Swordfish ^x
- Shark ^x
- King mackerel ^x
- Gulf tilefish ^x
- Marlin **
- Orange roughy **
- Grouper
- Chilean sea bass
- Bluefish
- Halibut
- Sablefish (Black cod)
- Spanish mackerel (Gulf)
- Tuna (except Skipjack and canned light)



^x The FDA says that women of childbearing age and young children should avoid these fish.

** The FDA is considering advising women of childbearing age and young children to avoid these fish.