

# Seafood for Health

## Seafood advice for consumers

*A joint project of Oregon State University, Cornell University,  
and the Universities of California, Delaware, Florida and  
Rhode Island*



## Balancing Benefits & Risks

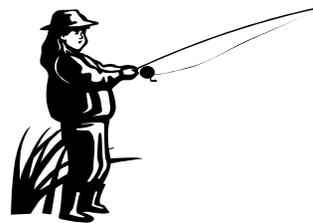
- ◆ Health benefits of eating seafood outweigh the risks from contaminants such as mercury
- ◆ The most commonly eaten seafoods in the United States present very little risk from contaminants like mercury while offering many health and nutrition benefits
- ◆ Consumers should focus on limiting exposure to bacteria that grow when seafood isn't stored correctly. Learn proper handling, storing, and cooking under the **Seafood Safety** section below
- ◆ For most people the risk from mercury by eating fish and shellfish is not a health concern
- ◆ The greatest risk of exposure to contaminants is from seafood caught by family and friends in polluted lakes and rivers. Remove the skin from the fish and trim the fat to reduce exposure
- ◆ Removing seafood from the diet can have negative effects on human health.
- ◆ Follow the **Guidelines for Consumers** on the back to lower risks and maximize benefits

## Seafood Safety



To reduce your risk of foodborne illness:

- ◆ Refrigerate fish below 40°F
- ◆ Keep cooked and raw seafood separate
- ◆ Wash hands, knives, and forks before and after touching raw or cooked seafood
- ◆ Cook seafood to an internal temperature of 145°F for at least 15 seconds
- ◆ Properly cooked seafood should be moist and a solid color throughout
- ◆ Purchase seafood from retailers that have good quality and cleanliness



## Seafood Benefits

Seafood is a healthy food choice for people of all ages!

- It provides key nutrients for infants and children
- Good source of protein
- Low in saturated fat
- Rich in vitamins and minerals



**Seafood is the main source of the omega-3 fatty acids eicosapentaenoic (EPA) & docsahexaenoic acid (DHA). These nutrients:**

- Promote healthy brain and eye development in children
- Increase duration of gestation
- Help build muscles and tissues
- Reduce the risk of heart disease in adults

**U.S. health organizations intake recommendations:**

- 250 mg per day for general population
- 1000 mg per day for people with heart disease



**Pregnant and breastfeeding women and children also need EPA and DHA! Oily fish, like salmon, herring, mackerel and sardines are good sources.**

*For good health eat a variety of seafood twice a week*

For more information, visit our website:

<http://seafoodhealthfacts.org>

---

# Guidelines for Consumers

One serving= 4 ounces of cooked fish or shellfish (about the size of the palm of your hand)

## Healthy teenagers and adults



- ◇ Should eat 8 or more ounces of a variety of seafood per week
- ◇ Can reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease by eating seafood regularly
- ◇ Can have added benefits from seafood high in EPA and DHA
- ◇ May eat raw or partially cooked seafood at their own risk

## Women who are or may become pregnant or who are breast-feeding



- ◇ Should eat *at least* 8 ounces and up to 12 ounces of a variety of seafood per week, which includes canned light tuna, salmon, shrimp, pollock, and catfish
- ◇ Mothers and their infants can benefit from seafood, especially types high in EPA and DHA
- ◇ Can eat up to 6 ounces of albacore (white) tuna per week
- ◇ Should avoid large predatory fish such as shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel due to higher mercury levels
- ◇ Should not eat raw or partially cooked seafood

## Children 12 years and under



- ◇ Should eat about 8 ounces of a variety of seafood per week
- ◇ May benefit from eating seafood, especially types high in EPA and DHA
- ◇ Can eat up to 6 ounces of albacore (white) tuna per week, as part of the total weekly seafood intake
- ◇ Should avoid large predatory fish, such as shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel due to higher mercury levels
- ◇ Young children should not eat raw or partially cooked seafood

## Immuno-compromised individuals and older adults



- ◇ Should eat a variety of seafood at least twice per week
- ◇ Can reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease by eating seafood regularly
- ◇ Can have added benefits from seafood high in EPA and DHA
- ◇ Should not eat raw or partially cooked seafood

## All individuals who eat recreationally-caught fish or shellfish



- ◇ Some local river systems and inland lakes may contain higher levels of contaminants
- ◇ These contaminants can accumulate in the local fish and shellfish populations
- ◇ State and tribal environmental programs and the department of health test local waters and issue fish and shellfish consumption advisories
- ◇ Before eating recreationally-caught seafood, check with the State Health Department for advisories or visit <http://epa.gov/waterscience/fish/states.htm>

Sources: 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), American Heart Association (AHA), and Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

---

For more information, visit our website:

<http://seafoodhealthfacts.org>