

ADVICE ABOUT EATING FISH

For Women Who Are or Might Become Pregnant, Breastfeeding Mothers, and Young Children

Eating fish‡ when pregnant or breastfeeding can provide [health benefits](#).

Fish and other protein-rich foods have nutrients that can help your child's growth and development. As part of a healthy eating pattern, eating fish may also offer heart health benefits and lower the risk of obesity.



Nutritional Value of Fish

The [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends:


- At least 8 ounces of seafood (less for young children) per week based on a 2,000 calorie diet
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to consume between 8 and 12 ounces of a variety of seafood per week, from choices that are lower in mercury.

Fish are part of a [healthy eating pattern](#) and provide:

- Protein
- Healthy omega-3 fats (called DHA and EPA)
- More vitamin B₁₂ and vitamin D than any other type of food
- Iron which is important for infants, young children, and women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant
- Other minerals like selenium, zinc, and iodine.

Choose a variety of fish that are lower in mercury. ([See chart on other side of page.](#))

While it is important to limit mercury in the diets of women who are pregnant and breastfeeding and young children, many types of fish are both nutritious and lower in mercury.

This advice supports the recommendations of the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, developed for people 2 years and older, which reflects current science on nutrition to improve public health. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* focuses on dietary patterns and the effects of food and nutrient characteristics on health. For advice about feeding children under 2 years of age, you can consult the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) .

This chart can help you choose which fish to eat, and how often to eat them, based on their mercury levels.

What is a serving? As a guide, use the palm of your hand.



For an adult 1 serving = 4 ounces

Eat 2 to 3 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list (OR 1 serving from the “Good Choices” list).



For children, a serving is 1 ounce at age 2 and increases with age to 4 ounces by age 11.

If you eat fish caught by family or friends, check for [fish advisories](#). If there is no advisory, eat only one serving and no other fish that week.*

Best Choices EAT 2 TO 3 SERVINGS A WEEK			OR	Good Choices EAT 1 SERVING A WEEK		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop		Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Atlantic croaker	Lobster, American and spiny	Shad		Buffalofish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Atlantic mackerel	Mullet	Shrimp		Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Black sea bass	Oyster	Skate		Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish	Sheepshead	Weakfish/seatrout
Butterfish	Pacific chub mackerel	Smelt		Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/Pacific croaker
Catfish	Perch, freshwater and ocean	Sole		Halibut	Spanish mackerel	
Clam	Pickering	Squid		Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Striped bass (ocean)	
Cod	Plaice	Tilapia				
Crab	Pollock	Trout, freshwater				
Crawfish	Salmon	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)				
Flounder	Sardine	Whitefish				
Haddock		Whiting				
Hake						
				Choices to Avoid HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS		
				King mackerel	Shark	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
				Marlin	Swordfish	Tuna, bigeye
				Orange roughy		

* Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants. State advisories will tell you how often you can safely eat those fish.

www.FDA.gov/fishadvice
www.EPA.gov/fishadvice



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