

Seafood Guidelines

Why eat fish?

Fish are excellent sources of protein, B vitamins, vitamin D, trace minerals, and essential omega-3 fatty acids. They are also low in unhealthy fats. Some fish are richer sources of omega-3's than others; these are also richer sources of vitamin D. (See list of top choices on next page.) Omega-3 fatty acids are the healthy fats that are most lacking in the average diet and are important for optimal immune function, metabolism, hormone production, cognitive function, cardiovascular health, and reducing inflammation.

Can I eat too much fish?

There is some risk of ingesting contaminants (mercury, lead, antibiotics, PCB's, food dyes, etc.) when eating fish, but this risk can be reduced by adhering to the following guidelines.

- **Aim for 2-4 servings of a variety of fish each week.** As a general guideline, most people will benefit by including a moderate amount of fish in their diet. Pregnant and breast-feeding women should limit consumption to 12 ounces per week of cooked seafood and should avoid the fish listed in point #4 below.
- **Purchase fresh, whole fish.** It is best to purchase fresh, whole fish displayed on thick layers of ice as opposed to pre-packaged fish fillets, fish sticks, and burgers, which are likely to be of inferior quality fish product. Fresh fish should have a clean smell – not overly fishy or sour. (You need not buy the fish whole – have the fish store fillet it for you.)
- **Reduce PCB's and other contaminants.** Prepare your fish by removing the skin and any visible fat, scoring the flesh, grilling or broiling, and letting the juices drip away.
- **Avoid these fish entirely:** shark, tile fish, swordfish, king mackerel, albacore white tuna, and blue fin tuna steak. These are larger predator fish at the top of the food chain that accumulate the most mercury and other contaminants.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON SALMON

Salmon is known to be a particularly good source of omega-3 fats. As such, it is widely consumed and available as wild, organically farm-raised, and conventionally farm-raised. It is the most widely studied fish in terms of health benefits and risks.

To get the maximum health benefits from salmon, follow these additional guidelines:

- **Choose wild salmon** whenever possible since it is likely to have fewer PCB's, dioxins, pesticides, food dyes, and other contaminants than the other 2 varieties. It also tends to be leaner. The downside is that it is considerably more expensive and may not always be available.
- **Choose Coho, Chum, and Pink wild salmon.** These have been found to be the least contaminated. Most stores and restaurants label the salmon. If not, be sure to ask the fish monger or chef.
- **Choose organic farm-raised over conventional farm-raised.** If you cannot get, or cannot afford, wild salmon, this is the next best choice. Any farmed raised fish is likely to have higher levels of contamination due to proximity to industrial chemicals. However, organic farm raising means the fish is raised in less crowded pens without antibiotics or hormones. It is also fed with the by-products and trimmings of fish that is caught for human consumption, not industrial fish meal. The permitted oil content of the feed (where the majority of contaminants are found) is less than that fed to conventionally farm-raised fish.
- **Limit your intake of conventionally farm-raised salmon, opt for Chilean, and avoid Scottish.** About 98% of farmed salmon is produced in Norway, Chile, Canada, and UK (Scotland). Most that is available in the US is from Chile and Canada. The salmon from Chile is considerably less contaminated, while that from Scotland has been found to be the most contaminated.

DANA'S TOP SEAFOOD CHOICES

The following fish are the best sources of omega-3 with the least amount of risk of contaminants. This means it is safe to enjoy them once a week or more.

- Wild Salmon - Coho, Pink, Chum
- Organic farm raised salmon**
- Sardines
- Rainbow trout (farmed)
- Shrimp (farmed or wild)
- Tuna - canned chunk light, fresh yellowfin
- Seabass
- Cod (Pacific)**
- Herring**
- Mahi-mahi (Dorado)**
- Scallops
- Sole (Pacific or Atlantic)
- Squid
- Striped bass (farmed)
- Tilapia (farmed)**
- Mackerel (Atlantic or Spanish)
- Bronzino**
- Catfish (farmed) **

** Limit these fish to no more than one serving per week.

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