



Press Office
Food and Drug Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

FDA STATEMENT
June 6, 2006

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FDA/EPA Advisory on Seafood Consumption Still Current

In response to recent inquiries about the FDA/EPA consumer advisory, "What You Need to Know About Mercury in Fish and Shellfish," FDA and EPA want to assure consumers that the advice contained in the 2004 advisory remains current and that FDA and EPA stand behind it. The advisory's recommendations are specific to women who might become pregnant, women who are pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children.

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy diet and can contribute to heart health and children's proper growth and development. Because of their many healthy benefits we recommend that women and young children include them as a regular part of their diet. However, nearly all fish and shellfish contain traces of mercury.

By following 3 recommendations for selecting and eating fish or shellfish, women and young children will receive the benefits of eating fish and shellfish and be confident that they have reduced their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury.

1. Do not eat Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, or Tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury.
 - Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish.
 - Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna per week.
3. Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in your local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. If no advice is available eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) per week of fish you catch from local waters, but don't consume any other fish during that week.

Follow these same recommendations when feeding fish and shellfish to your young children but serve smaller portions.

FDA continues to test fish and shellfish for mercury. Should there be a significant change in the underlying science regarding the risks from methylmercury or the benefits from fish, FDA and EPA will update the advisory to ensure that the public is informed when making choices about the amounts and types of fish to eat.

The complete 2004 FDA/EPA advisory, "What You Need to Know About Mercury in Fish and Shellfish," can be found at www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/admehg3.html.

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