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Guidelines for Eating Fish that Contain Mercury

To enjoy the benefits of eating fish while minimizing exposure to mercury, you should:

- Eat mainly types of fish low in mercury; and
- Limit your consumption of types of fish with typically higher levels of mercury.

Fish are important in a healthy diet. They are a lean, low-calorie source of protein. However, some fish may contain mercury or other harmful chemicals at sufficiently high levels to be a concern.

Federal, state and local governments issue fish consumption advisories when fish are unsafe to eat. The advisories may suggest that people avoid eating certain kinds or certain amounts of fish.

- Some advisories apply to specific water types (like specific lakes).
- Some may focus on groups of particularly sensitive people (e.g., women of childbearing age).
- Some advisories include notices of "no restriction" to tell us that certain fish are safe to eat.

News

July 2019 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Notice.

In accordance with a directive from Congress, FDA is announcing revised advice about eating fish. This revision updates advice that FDA and EPA jointly issued in January 2017. The advice is intended to help women who are or might become pregnant,

The degree of exposure to mercury depends on both the amount and the type of fish eaten. If you are concerned for your health or your family's as a result of a potential exposure to mercury, get in touch with your health care provider. She will be able to tell you if the degree of mercury exposure is a concern, and what to do about it.

Resources for Avoiding Mercury in Fish and Shellfish

- EPA-FDA **national** advisory on mercury in fish and shellfish <<https://epa.gov/fish-tech/2017-epa-fda-advice-about-eating-fish-and-shellfish>>
- EPA consumer site: Choose Fish and Shellfish Wisely <<https://epa.gov/choose-fish-and-shellfish-wisely>>
- EPA website on Technical Resources for Fish and Shellfish Consumption <<https://epa.gov/fish-tech>>
- States issue **local fish advisories** that tell consumers about how often they should eat certain types and quantities of locally caught fish.
 - General information about state and local fish advisories <<https://epa.gov/choose-fish-and-shellfish-wisely/how-do-i-know-if-fish-i-caught-contaminated>>
 - Map listing fish advisories where you live <<https://fishadvisoryonline.epa.gov/general.aspx>> -- search the National Listing of Fish Advisories to find recommendations for eating fish caught in waterbodies near you.

breastfeeding mothers, and parents of children over two years make informed choices about fish that are nutritious and safe to eat. Read the announcement [🔗](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/07/09/2019-14524/advice-about-eating-fish-for-women-who-are-or-might-become-pregnant-breastfeeding-mothers-and-young) <<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/07/09/2019-14524/advice-about-eating-fish-for-women-who-are-or-might-become-pregnant-breastfeeding-mothers-and-young>>.

Related Information

FDA.gov:

- Seafood page [🔗](http://www.fda.gov/food/populartopics/ucm341987.htm) <<http://www.fda.gov/food/populartopics/ucm341987.htm>>

- Health.gov: 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans [↗](https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/)

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- Data on mercury concentrations in different species of fish (1990-2012) [↗](https://www.fda.gov/food/metals/mercury-levels-commercial-fish-and-shellfish-1990-2012)

<<https://www.fda.gov/food/metals/mercury-levels-commercial-fish-and-shellfish-1990-2012>>

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