



# Fish Facts for Families

## Choose Fish Low in Mercury

### Fish to Eat No More Than Once per Month

"White" or "Albacore" or *yellow fin*  
"Bluefin" canned tuna.  
See list on reverse.

Women who might become pregnant, who are pregnant or nursing, and young children should eat **no more than one can of white tuna per month** because it may contain more mercury than "light" tuna.

Also limit Bluefish, Grouper, Lobster and Orange Roughy to one serving per month.

### High-Mercury Fish to Avoid

- Fresh or frozen tuna steaks
- Swordfish, Shark, Marlin or Tilefish steaks
- Muskellunge (freshwater)
- Walleye (freshwater)

Women who might become pregnant, who are pregnant or nursing, and young children should avoid these large, long-lived fish because they are high in mercury. Men and other women can eat one serving of these fish per month.

Everyone, including pregnant women, should eat fish and shellfish for their many benefits. These foods are a great source of protein and other nutrients; they are low in saturated fat, and rich in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Fish is the main food source of omega-3 fatty acids, especially fatty fish that live in cold water.

Fish and shellfish are good for the health of your heart, and for the growth and development of children, especially before they are born.

Recently people have become worried about the safety of eating fish and shellfish. One concern is about mercury. Most seafood contains only a tiny amount of mercury.

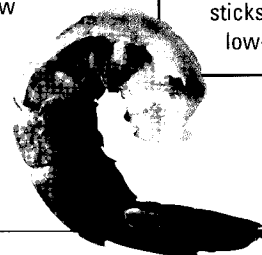
A few types of fish and shellfish contain higher amounts which could harm an unborn baby or a young child's developing nervous system. The higher-mercury fish are usually big, predatory fish that have eaten lots of other, lower-mercury fish over the course of their long lives.

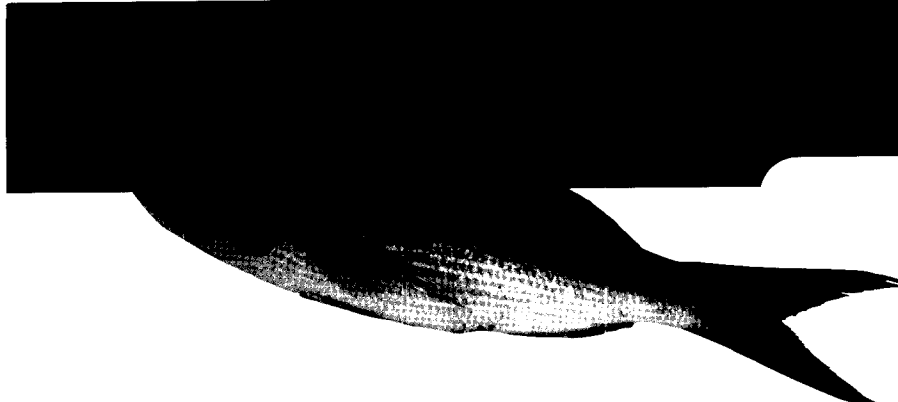
Women who could become pregnant, women who are pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children are advised to eat less of or avoid higher-mercury fish, and to eat fish that is low in mercury instead.

### These Fish and Shellfish are Low in Mercury – Enjoy Often!

- "Light" canned tuna (Skipjack, ~~Yellowfin~~, Tongol – Read the label).
- Canned sardines, anchovies.
- Canned salmon (usually wild, Pacific salmon. Read the label to be sure).
- Eat freely:
 

Bass	Perch
Clams	Pollock
Cod	Scallops
Crab	Shrimp
Flounder	Skate
Haddock	Snapper
Halibut	Sole
Herring	Squid
Mackerel	Tilapia
Oysters	Trout
Pacific salmon	
- Breaded fish such as frozen fish cakes, fish sticks, and breaded fish sandwiches contain low-mercury fish.





### The Salmon Question

Salmon is a nutritious fish available fresh, frozen and canned. Canadian-farmed Atlantic salmon contains higher levels of dioxins than does Pacific salmon. (Note that canned salmon is almost always Pacific, or "wild" salmon.) Dioxins are a group of toxic chemicals which contaminate the environment and the food chain.

The amount of dioxins in Atlantic salmon is still within government safety limits. However, you can lower the amount of dioxins in your Atlantic salmon meal even more with careful cooking. Simply remove the skin and some of the brown fatty meat before cooking, and cook the fish on a rack or grill so that the fat drains away.

### What About Sport Fish?

Sport fish is fish caught by family and friends in local lakes and rivers. Some of these fish can be eaten by anyone at any age or stage of development. However, certain types of fish, especially larger fish, are contaminated. These should be either limited or avoided completely, especially by young children, and women of childbearing age.

If you eat sport fish, you need to get a copy of the *Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish*, Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The guide is published every other year, and is available at no charge from provincial government offices, and liquor and beer stores starting in April. You can also view the guide on the Internet at [www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/index.htm](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/index.htm).

### Canned Tuna

Read the Label!  
Look for "Light" vs. "White"

#### Eat Frequently

Flaked **Light** Tuna

Chunk **Light** Tuna

Solid **Light** Tuna

~~Note: Yellowfin - Light~~

#### Eat Less Often

Pregnant women and young children should eat no more than **once a month**

Flaked **White** Tuna  
**Albacore or Bluefin**

Solid **White** Tuna  
**Albacore or Bluefin**

yellowfin

170 grams = approx. 6 oz.  
120 grams = approx. 4 oz.



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