



Fish and Shellfish Consumption During Pregnancy

Seafood has come under scrutiny for a number of reasons. One reason is pollution and its impact on coastal waters, as people eat fish from these bodies of water. Currently, researchers are examining how pollution and pesticides might affect a developing fetus and small children. Concerns about seafood are focused on two problems: PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and methyl mercury.

- PCBs: A group of industrial substances once used in electrical equipment and other products. Although banned, PCBs are still present as pollutants in some freshwater lakes and rivers.
- Methyl mercury: Accumulates in fish with long life spans (swordfish, shark and tuna).

Guidelines for Consuming Fish and Seafood during Pregnancy

Compiled from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Environmental Working Group, and U.S. Public Interest Research Group

- Fish and seafood are excellent low-fat sources of many nutrients including protein, omega-3 fatty acids and minerals, such as calcium and zinc.
- Pregnant women should avoid raw fish to reduce the risk of viral and bacterial illness.
- Pregnant women should select a variety of other kinds of fish, including shellfish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish or farm-raised fish. They can safely eat 12 ounces of cooked fish per week, with a typical serving size between three to six ounces.
- Limit albacore (white) tuna (even canned) to six ounces per week as it contains more mercury than canned light tuna.
- Keep fish and shellfish refrigerated or frozen until ready to use.

Avoid if Pregnant or Nursing	Limit to Once a Month	Lowest in Mercury
Shark Swordfish King Mackerel Tile Fish Tuna Steaks Sea Bass Gulf Coast Oysters Halibut King Mackerel Largemouth Bass Marline Pike Walleye White Croaker	Blue Mussels Cod Eastern Oyster Great Lakes Salmon Gulf of Mexico Blue Crab Lake Whitefish Mahi Mahi Pollock Wild Channel Catfish Farm-raised Salmon	Canned Light Tuna Croaker Farm-raised Catfish Farm-raised Trout Fish Sticks Flounder Haddock Pollack Mid-Atlantic Blue Crab Shrimp Wild Pacific Salmon