

Mercury Levels in Fish

We know that fish can be very nutritious and are packed with great nutrients such as omega-3's, the B vitamins and lean protein. But unfortunately, fish can also have some unhealthy contaminants. Mercury is a contaminant found in fish that can affect brain development and the nervous system. The FDA has released guidelines for children, women who are pregnant and women who are trying to become pregnant. These guidelines state that no more than 12 oz of low mercury fish should be consumed weekly. "Highest" mercury fish should be avoided and "high" mercury fish should be kept to only three 6-oz servings per month.

What does this mean for women who are pregnant but also trying to get some of their much needed nutrients from the critters of the sea? It is all about **moderation**. Recent information released in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* says that no one should cut fish out of their diet altogether. Fish contains too many healthy nutrients that are essential for growth and development, especially in a pregnant mom and baby. There are 4 types of fish that should be on the list to avoid due to mercury levels. These include: shark, king mackerel, swordfish and tilefish.

For information regarding other types of fish, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has released a list of fish and their mercury levels so that people can be informed on what they are consuming. If you want to get more detailed information about mercury levels and how much you personally are consuming, you can also use the [mercury thermometer](#) to calculate your totals.

Highest Mercury

AVOID Eating

Grouper
Marlin
Orange roughy
Tilefish
Swordfish
Shark
Mackerel (king)

High Mercury

Eat no more than three 6-oz servings per month

Sea Bass
Croaker
Halibut
Bluefish
Tuna (canned, white albacore) See tuna chart below
Tuna (fresh bluefin, ahi)
Sea Trout
Lobster (American, Maine)

LOWER MERCURY

Eat no more than six 6-oz servings per month

Carp
Mahi Mahi
Crab (dungness, snow, blue)
Snapper
Herring
Cod (Alaskan)
Monkfish
Perch (freshwater)
Skate
Cod*
Tuna (canned, chunk light)
Tuna (fresh pacific albacore)

LOWEST MERCURY

Enjoy two 6-oz servings per week

Anchovies
Butterfish
Calamari (squid)
Crab (king)
Pollock
Catfish
Whitefish
Perch (ocean)
Scallops
Flounder
Haddock
Hake
Herring
Lobster (spiny/rock)
Shad (American)
Shrimp
Sole
Crawfish/crayfish
Salmon
Shrimp
Clams
Tilapia
Oysters
Sardines
Trout

Chart obtained from the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC); data obtained by the FDA and the EPA.

Tuna mercury levels can be different based on the type of tuna and where it was caught. The NRDC created the chart below as a guideline to how much tuna can be eaten by children, pregnant women or women wanting to conceive, based on their weight.

Weight in Pounds	Frequency a Person Can Safely Eat A 6-ounce Can of Tuna	
	White Albacore	Chunk Light
20lbs	1 can/10 wks	1 can/3 wks
30lbs	1 can/6 wks	1 can/2 wks
40lbs	1 can/5 weeks	1 can/11 days
50lbs	1 can/4 weeks	1 can/9 days
60lbs	1 can/3 weeks	1 can/7 days
70lbs	1 can/3 weeks	1 can/6 days
80lbs	1 can/2 weeks	1 can/ 6 days
90lbs	1 can/2 weeks	1 can/5 days
100lbs	1 can/2 weeks	1 can/5 days
110lbs	1 can/12 days	1 can/4 days
120lbs	1 can/11 days	1 can/4 days
130lbs	1 can/10 days	1 can/4 days
140lbs	1 can/10 days	1 can/3 days
150lbs +	1 can/9 days	1 can/3 days