



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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Mercury Contamination in Fish

A Guide to Staying Healthy and Fighting Back

► [En Español](#)

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

Consumer Guide to Mercury in Fish

The list below shows the amount of various types of fish that a woman who is pregnant or planning to become pregnant can safely eat, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA recommendation is based on body weight and is, therefore, dependent on a person's size. The guidance below is based on a 6oz serving of cooked fish for a 130lb/60kg woman. People with small children who want to use the list as a guide should reduce portion sizes. Adult men, and women who are not planning to become pregnant, are less at risk from mercury exposure but may wish to refer to the list for low-mercury choices. For a more personalized recommendation, use NRDC's [mercury calculator](#).

Protecting yourself -- and the fish: Certain fish, even some that are low in mercury, make poor choices for other reasons, most often because they have been fished so extensively that their numbers are perilously low. These fish are marked with an asterisk ([read more below](#)).

This list applies to fish caught and sold commercially. For information about fish you catch yourself, check for [advisories](#) in your state.

LEAST MERCURY

Enjoy these fish:

Anchovies
Butterfish
Catfish
Clam
Crab (Domestic)
Crawfish/Crayfish
Croaker (Atlantic)
Flounder*
Haddock (Atlantic)*
Hake
Herring
Mackerel (N. Atlantic, Chub)
Mullet
Oyster
Perch (Ocean)
Plaice
Pollock
Salmon (Canned)**
Salmon (Fresh)**
Sardine

[Learn About Mercury and Its Effects](#)

[Know Where It's Coming From](#)

[Protect Yourself and Your Family](#)

[Reducing Mercury Pollution](#)

Mercury Guides

Trim your intake of mercury with these useful guides.

[NRDC's Mercury Calculator](#)

Plus:

[Eating Tuna Safely](#)
[Guide to Mercury in Fish](#)
[Mercury in Sushi](#)
[Sportfish Highest in Mercury](#)

Mercury in Fish Wallet Card



If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, use [this guide](#) to see what amounts of fish caught and sold commercially are safe to eat.



Information for
Medical Professionals

Scallop*
Shad (American)
Shrimp*
Sole (Pacific)
Squid (Calamari)
Tilapia
Trout (Freshwater)
Whitefish
Whiting

MODERATE MERCURY

Eat six servings or less per month:

Bass (Striped, Black)
Carp
Cod (Alaskan)*
Croaker (White Pacific)
Halibut (Atlantic)*
Halibut (Pacific)
Jacksmelt
(Silverside)
Lobster
Mahi Mahi
Monkfish*
Perch (Freshwater)
Sablefish
Skate*
Snapper*
Tuna (Canned)

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<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/guide.asp>

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HIGH MERCURY

Eat three servings or less per month:

Bluefish
Grouper*
Mackerel (Spanish, Gulf)
Sea Bass (Chilean)*
Tuna (Canned Albacore)
Tuna (Yellowfin)*

HIGHEST MERCURY

Avoid eating:

Mackerel (King)
Marlin*
Orange Roughy*
Shark*
Swordfish*
Tilefish*
Tuna (Bigeye, Ahi)*

* **Fish in Trouble!** These fish are perilously low in numbers or are caught using environmentally destructive methods. To learn more, see the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) and the [The Safina Center](#) (formerly Blue Ocean Institute), both of which provide guides to fish to enjoy or avoid on the basis of environmental factors.

** **Farmed Salmon** may contain PCB's, chemicals with serious long-term health effects.

Sources for NRDC's guide: The data for this guide to mercury in fish comes from two federal agencies: the Food and Drug Administration, which [tests fish for mercury](#), and the Environmental Protection Agency, which determines [mercury levels that it considers safe](#) for women of

childbearing age. [View the equations](#) we used to make these serving recommendations.

About the mercury-level categories: The categories on the list (least mercury to highest mercury) are determined according to the following mercury levels in the flesh of tested fish.

- Least mercury: Less than 0.09 parts per million
- Moderate mercury: From 0.09 to 0.29 parts per million
- High mercury: From 0.3 to 0.49 parts per million
- Highest mercury: More than .5 parts per million

[Intro](#) | [Effects](#) | [Sources](#) | [Protect Yourself](#) | [Reducing Pollution](#) | [For Medical Professionals](#)

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