

## Reel in the Facts About Mercury in Fish



Fish are fun to catch and good to eat. Fish are healthy food - high in protein and low in fat.

But too much of a good thing can be bad for you. All fish contain some mercury. Eating too much mercury-contaminated fish can be harmful to your health and your child's health.

### Keep Eating Fish

The benefits of eating fish outweigh the health risks as long as you follow these guidelines.

This brochure will help you to:

- \* decide which fish to eat,
- \* determine how often to eat fish, and
- \* identify fish with high levels of mercury.

### Mercury

Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain that is just starting to form and grow. That's why young children, babies in the womb and breast-fed babies are at most risk. Too much mercury may affect a child's behavior and lead to learning problems later in life.

Mercury can also harm older children and adults. Older children and adults can experience symptoms of numbness and tingling, memory loss, and vision changes following exposure to mercury. Recent studies conducted in Europe have linked mercury to heart disease and blood pressure changes. Mercury can come from natural and man-made sources. Mercury in the air settles into lakes and rivers. It can then build up in fish. All fish have some mercury, including:

- \* fish caught in Wisconsin lakes and rivers,
- \* fish caught in waters in other states, and
- \* fish you buy in the store or eat in a restaurant



However, you can't see, smell or taste mercury in fish. That's why it's important to know which fish are safer than others to eat.

### Which Fish are More Likely to Contain Higher Amounts of Mercury?

- \* larger fish
- \* older fish
- \* fish that feed on other fish (walleye, northern, bass)

### Can't We Trim Away or Clean or Cook the Fish to Get Rid of the Mercury?

No, the mercury gets into the flesh. However, by removing fat when you clean and cook fish, you can help to reduce the amount of other contaminants like PCBs.

### How Big is a Meal Size?

One meal is assumed to be one-half pound of fish before cooking for a 150-pound person. Meal sizes for people weighing less may be adjusted accordingly (e.g. 1/4 pound uncooked for 75-pound person).

### Should I Just Stop Eating Fish?

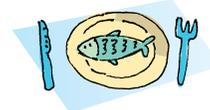
No...just be sure to follow the guidelines presented in this brochure.

### More Information.

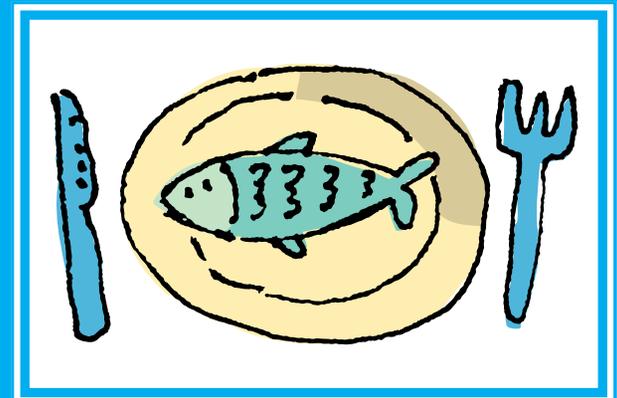
These are general guidelines based on mercury levels measured in fish throughout Wisconsin and levels of mercury found in commercial fish. More specific advice is available for fish from Wisconsin lakes and rivers that have been tested.

For information on mercury and other contaminants in Wisconsin gamefish, consult the full fish consumption advisory booklet. This booklet is available at your local Department of Natural Resources (DNR) office, your local health department, or on the web at <http://dnr.wi.gov>. You can find more information by visiting these websites: <http://dhfs.wi.gov/eh/Fish>; [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov); and [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

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# A Family Guide to Eating Fish from Wisconsin



Safe eating guidelines for fish from Wisconsin lakes, ponds, and rivers and for fish bought in restaurants and stores.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

# SAFE EATING GUIDELINES for women who are pregnant, planning to be pregnant, or are breastfeeding and for children under age 15.

For most of Wisconsin's inland (non-Great Lakes) waters.\*

<b>WEEKLY</b>	<p><b>2 meals per WEEK</b>   Atlantic or Pacific Salmon (not Great Lakes), canned "light" tuna, farm-raised catfish, shrimp, pollock, and other purchased fish low in mercury.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per WEEK*</b>   Wisconsin panfish, includes bluegill, sunfish, crappies, yellow perch, and bullheads.</p>
<b>MONTHLY</b>	<p><b>2 meals per MONTH</b>   Canned "white" tuna (6 oz.), tuna steaks, and halibut.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>1 meal per MONTH*</b>   Wisconsin gamefish including walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and any other Wisconsin species</p>
<b>NEVER</b>	<p><b>NEVER EAT</b>   <b>ANY SWORDFISH, SHARK, KING MACKEREL, TILEFISH, OR WISCONSIN MUSKIE</b></p>

## SAFE EATING GUIDELINES for men and women beyond their childbearing years.

**Unrestricted (up to 2 meals per week)\*** – Wisconsin panfish. Also, Pacific or Atlantic salmon (not Great Lakes), canned "light" tuna (6 oz.), farm-raised catfish, shrimp, pollock, and other purchased fish low in mercury.

**1 meal per week\*** – Wisconsin gamefish and any other Wisconsin species. Also, canned "white" tuna, tuna steaks, and halibut.

**1 meal per month** – Purchased shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish.

\*On certain waters, where data indicate higher mercury levels, more restrictive advice is needed. Please visit our website at: <http://dhfs.wi.gov/eh/fish> or call your local health department.



Fish is good for you. Eat fish low in mercury!



For more information about purchasing fish, visit the FDA website at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

FISH YOU CATCH IN WISCONSIN	MERCURY LEVEL	FISH YOU PURCHASE
<p><b>PANFISH</b></p> <p><b>BLUEGILL</b>  <b>YELLOW PERCH</b> </p> <p><b>BLACK CRAPPIE</b>  <b>WHITE CRAPPIE</b> </p>	<b>LOW</b>	<p><b>COMMERCIAL FISH</b></p> <p><b>CANNED "LIGHT" TUNA</b>  <b>SALMON</b> </p> <p><b>SHRIMP</b>  <b>POLLOCK</b> </p>
<p><b>GAMEFISH</b></p> <p><b>LARGEMOUTH BASS</b>  <b>SMALLMOUTH BASS</b> </p> <p><b>NORTHERN PIKE</b>  <b>WALLEYE</b> </p>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
<p><b>GAMEFISH</b></p> <p></p> <p>Some gamefish listed above can contain HIGH levels of mercury depending ON THE LAKE.</p>	<b>HIGH</b>	<p><b>COMMERCIAL FISH</b></p> <p><b>SWORDFISH</b>  <b>SHARK</b>  <b>TILEFISH</b> </p>