

A Guide To Eating Fish



This guide should be used to help choose fish sold in supermarkets or grocery stores. For more information on safely eating sport fish (fish caught in local lakes and rivers) visit ontario.ca/fishguide

Health Benefits

Eating a variety of fish is a great way to get the nutrients you, your baby and your children need, such as protein and omega-3 fatty acids. These nutrients are important for good health. There are plenty of options you can choose from such as salmon, pollock, and tilapia.

Mercury In Fish

Most fish and shellfish contain small amounts of mercury that are safe to eat. Large fish, such as marlin and shark, that live for a long time and eat other fish can contain higher mercury levels. Eating too much fish that are high in mercury can be harmful, especially for:

- Women who could become pregnant
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- Children
- A fetus and baby are the most sensitive to high levels of mercury, which may lead to problems with learning, walking and talking.

Use the information in this guide to choose a variety of fish that are low in mercury to get the most benefits and lower health risks.

Raw Fish

Pregnant women, children under five, adults over sixty, and people with a weakened immune system should not eat raw fish or shellfish, including refrigerated smoked fish, sashimi and sushi dishes. Raw or undercooked fish may contain bacteria or parasites that can lead to food poisoning and if you are pregnant, this can affect the fetus.

Sustainable Seafood

The seafood we eat and how we fish or farm matters. Support sustainable seafood choices to protect wild fish stocks and their homes.

Visit seachoice.org to learn about organizations that provide seafood recommendations for consumers and businesses in Canada. When possible, choose fish products with the Ocean Wise sustainable label.

For more information

Contact **Health811**, 24 hours, 7 days/week to speak to a registered nurse or registered dietitian, at no cost. Call **811** or toll free **1-866-797-0000** or live chat at ontario.ca/health811

Safe To Eat Every Day Low Mercury Levels



For children:

Safe to eat once a day*

For women and teenage girls¹:

Safe to eat twice a day*

For men, teenage boys and women 50+:

Unlimited meals*

- Basa
- Crawfish
- Milkfish
- Octopus
- Pollock, Alaska ♥
- Salmon (Atlantic, Chum, Sockeye, Steelhead, Pink, canned) ♥
- Shiner
- Silver Pomfret
- Squid
- Tilapia

Safe To Eat Sometimes Medium Mercury Levels



For children:

Safe to eat 1 or 2 times a month*

For women and teenage girls¹:

Safe to eat once a week*

For men, teenage boys and women 50+:

Safe to eat 3 times a week*

- Anchovy ♥
- Arctic Char ♥
- Barracuda
- Bass (Striped) ♥
- Black Cod/Sablefish
- Buffalo
- Capelin ♥
- Catfish
- Clam
- Cod, Atlantic or Pacific
- Crab ♥
- Croaker
- Dolphin fish/Mahi Mahi /Dorado
- Eel
- Flounder/Sole
- Grass Carp
- Grouper

- Haddock
- Halibut, Pacific ♥
- Herring ♥
- Kamaboko
- Kingfish/King Mackerel /Spanish Mackerel ♥
- Lobster
- Mackerel, Atlantic ♥
- Perch
- Mussel
- Oyster ♥
- Pickerel/Walleye
- Pike/Jackfish
- Porgy/Bream
- Sailfish
- Salmon (Chinook) ♥
- Sardine ♥
- Scallop
- Sea Bass
- Sea urchin
- Shrimp/Prawn
- Skate
- Smelt ♥
- Snapper (Red)
- Sturgeon
- Trout (Lake, Rainbow) ♥
- Tuna (Albacore/White, Yellowfin, Light, Skipjack) ♥
- Turbot
- Wahoo/Ono
- Whelk
- Whitefish, Lake ♥
- Whiting

Avoid Or Eat Rarely High Mercury Levels



For children:

Eat less than once a month

For women and teenage girls¹:

Eat less than once a month

For men, teenage boys and women 50+:

Eat less than once a week

- Bigeye Tuna
- Dogfish (Spiny)
- Escolar/Snake Mackerel
- Halibut, Atlantic
- Kingclip/Cusk-eel
- Marlin
- Orange Roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tile Fish
- Patagonian Toothfish/ Chilean Sea Bass

★ = Fish is one of many protein foods in Canada's Food Guide. According to Health Canada, protein foods should take up **one quarter of your plate**.

Calculations for this guide are based on 75 grams of fish per meal, which is about a quarter of your plate

♥ = High omega-3 fatty-acids (Good for your heart)

"Children" = 12 years of age or under



¹Includes people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or who could become pregnant.

Image source: Canada.ca/FoodGuide