

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This is part of a series about how to enjoy fish safely. You can also read "Should I Eat the Fish I Catch?: A guide to healthy eating of the fish you catch" (available in several languages) to learn more about selecting fish from clean areas, choosing smaller fish, cleaning, and preparation. Call 1-800-490-9198 to order.

For more information about reducing your health risks from eating fish that contain chemical pollutants, contact your health or environmental protection department. You can find the telephone number in the blue section of your local telephone book.

You may also contact

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
MS- 4305
1200 Pennsylvania NW
Washington DC 20460

On the World Wide Web see

www.epa.gov/ost/fish

for information on fish advisories and links to all advisory programs and contacts

This brochure may be reproduced without EPA permission at no charge.

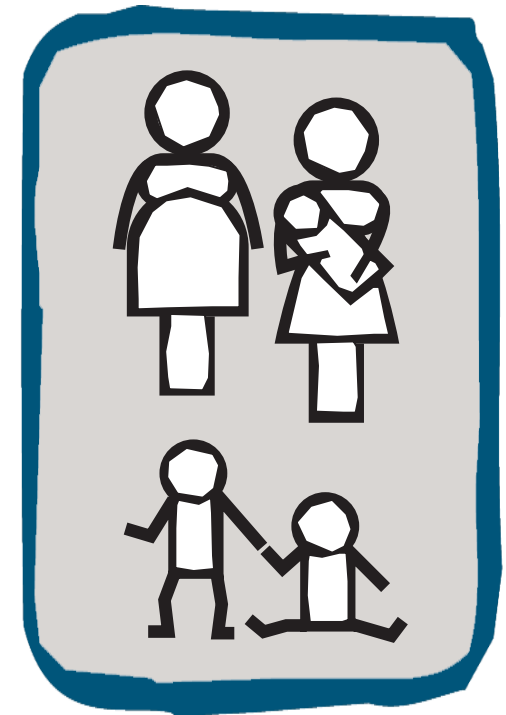
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA 823-F-01-012
April 2001

Office of Science and Technology (4305)

EPA SHOULD I EAT THE FISH I CATCH?

A guide to healthy eating for women and children



ATSDR
Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry

*Developed in collaboration with the Agency
for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry,
U.S. Public Health Service*

INTRODUCTION

Fish can be an important part of a healthy diet. But, some fish have harmful amounts of mercury. Mercury consumed by a **pregnant or nursing woman, or a young child, can harm the developing brain and nervous system.**

You can get the benefits of fish and avoid the risks of mercury by following fish advisories. Contact your Health Department for advice about the fish caught and sold in your area. If there is no special advice for your area, follow the federal advice given here.

In 2001, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued national advisories concerning mercury in fish.



FRESHWATER FISH CAUGHT BY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Contact your local Health Department for specific advisories for your area. If there are none, follow the federal advisories, below.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advises **pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children** to:

- ✓ limit their consumption of freshwater fish caught by family and friends to **one meal per week.**
 - for adults, one meal is 6 ounces of fish (cooked weight)
 - for children, one meal is 2 ounces
- ✓ for ocean fish caught by family and friends, use the advice for fish purchased in stores and restaurants.

see the next panel



FISH PURCHASED IN STORES AND RESTAURANTS

Contact your local Health Department for specific advisories for your area. If there are none, follow the federal advisories, below.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises **pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children** to:

- ✓ **not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish**

Women who are or may become pregnant:

- ✓ can safely eat an average of **12 ounces per week** (cooked weight) of other types of fish
 - choose a variety from shell fish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish, and farm-raised fish
 - fish purchased in stores and restaurants usually have less mercury than freshwater fish caught by family and friends, so you can safely eat more.