Remember:

Don't stop eating fish – it is a good source of nutrition. Follow this guide to eat fish and be healthy.

For More Information, Contact

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Keeping Connecticut Healthy
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Connecticut Department of Public Health

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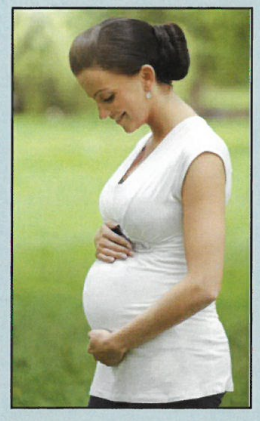
A Woman's Guide To Eating Fish Safely

Special Advice for Pregnant Women & Young Children



Fish are nutritious and good for you. However, you should eat less of some fish that contain chemicals that can affect your baby's growth.

If You Are:

- Pregnant
- A woman who could become pregnant
- A nursing mother
- A child under six years old

You Should:

- ➪ Continue to eat fish as part of a healthy diet while following this advice.
- ➪ Eat up to 2 fish meals a week.
- ➪ Select healthier fish from the market more often than others (See Table 1).
- ➪ Not eat swordfish, shark, or tuna sushi
- ➪ For fish caught in Connecticut waters:
  - Eat no more than one meal per month of freshwater fish.
  - Not eat striped bass or large bluefish from Long Island Sound.

Eating Supermarket Fish Safely

Many fish from the supermarket or restaurant are low in contaminants. Some fish are also high in good oils called omega-3 fatty acids. This nutrient enhances brain development and helps prevent heart disease. However, some fish from the market can contain higher levels of contaminants, such as mercury.

Here are some "healthy" tips:

- **Pregnant or nursing women and younger children should eat up to 2 fish meals a week.**
- **These meals should come from a variety of species, including canned tuna.**
- **When buying canned tuna, look for "light" tuna; it has less mercury than "white" tuna.**
- **Some very good species such as wild salmon are healthy to eat more than twice a week (see Table 1 with "hearts").**

➪ **Certain fish such as swordfish, shark or tuna sushi should not be eaten.**

Guidelines for Eating Fish from the Market

This section can be detached and used as a handy reference when shopping.

Use this chart to choose safer fish to eat

Table 1

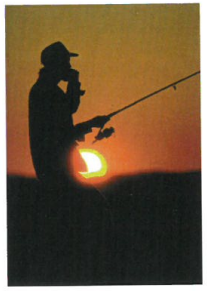
Eat 2 or More Meals a Week	Eat 1 Meal a Week
✔ Sardines & Anchovies ♥	☐ Tuna Steak
✔ Salmon (wild) ♥	☐ White Tuna (canned)
✔ Flounder & Fluke ♥	☐ Halibut
✔ Atlantic Mackerel ♥	☐ Catfish (farm-raised)
✔ Pollock ♥	☐ Red Snapper
✔ Sole ♥	**Eat None of These**
✔ Trout ♥	X Tuna Sushi
✔ Salmon (farm raised))	X Swordfish
✔ Cod	X Shark
✔ Tilapia	X King Mackerel
✔ Haddock	X Striped Bass
✔ Light Tuna (canned)	X Bluefish
✔ Shellfish (oysters, shrimp, clams, scallops, lobster)	

♥ Species especially low in contaminants can be eaten more than twice a week

Eating Locally Caught Fish Safely

Look for posted signs at fishing locations for consumption advice.

- Follow the statewide freshwater advisory (no more than one meal per month) and specific "Do Not Eat" advice shown in Table 2.
- You can eat as much locally caught trout as you want that are under 15 inches long. **However, do not eat trout from the Housatonic River.**
- Most saltwater fish from Long Island Sound are safe to eat, except striped bass and large bluefish.
- When possible, eat smaller fish such as panfish (yellow perch, sunfish).



Which Locally Caught Fish Should I Avoid Eating

Table 2

Pregnant women, women who could become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children should NOT eat the following locally caught fish:	
Long Island Sound and Connected Rivers Bluefish over 25 inches and Striped Bass Other fish from the Sound are OK to eat	
Connecticut River Carp, Catfish	**Versailles & Papermill Ponds** (Sprague) All species
Housatonic River Trout, Carp, Catfish, Bass, White Perch, Eels, Northern Pike	**Union Pond** (Manchester) Bass, Carp, Catfish
Wyassup Lake (Stonington) Bass, Pickerel	**Dodge Pond** (East Lyme) Bass, Pickerel
Lake McDonough (Barkhamstead) Bass, Pickerel	**Silver Lake** (Meriden) Bass, Pickerel

Background on Contaminants

Certain locally caught and market fish contain elevated levels of mercury or PCBs.

- **At high enough levels, these chemicals can cause nerve and kidney damage, poor growth, and learning problems.**
- **If you eat too much of these fish, your unborn baby may be harmed.**
- **It is important for pregnant women, women who could become pregnant, and nursing mothers to follow this advice.**

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