



What is mercury?

Mercury is a type of metal found in soil, rock, air, and water. It is used in thermometers, batteries, lamps, and other products. Some industries release mercury into the air, soil, and water.

How can mercury harm my baby?

Mercury can harm your baby when you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Babies born to mothers who have a lot of mercury in their bodies may develop more slowly and have problems learning. Young children can also be harmed by mercury. If you are worried about your child's health, call your doctor.



Salmon has little or no mercury.

For information about health advisories, contact:

- **Your local health department**
County Health Officers can be found at:
www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/home/hsites/lhdlinks.htm
- **California Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment/Pesticide and Environmental Toxicology Section**
(916) 327-7319 or (510) 622-3170
www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html
- **The California Department of Fish and Game Fishing Regulations booklet**
These are available where you buy your fishing license or at:
www.dfg.ca.gov/enforcement/regs.html
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**
www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advisory.html

For information about the fish you buy, contact:

- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition**
(800) SAFEFOOD
www.cfsan.fda.gov/seafood1.html

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Governor
State of California

Grantland Johnson
Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

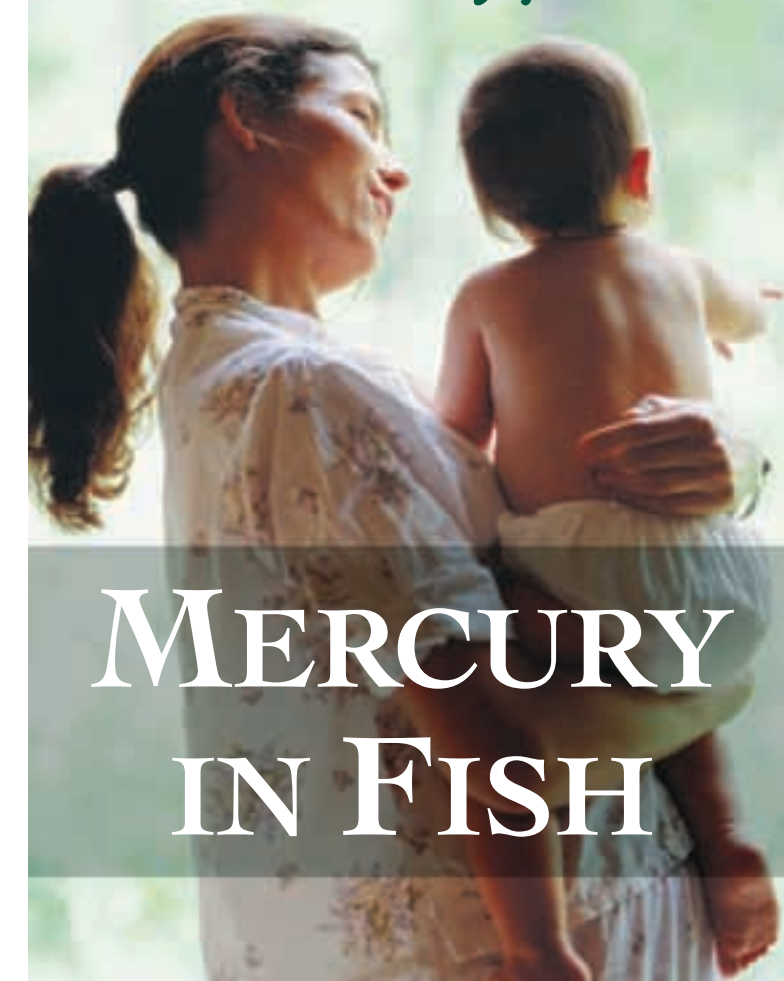
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Protecting Yourself and Your Family from



MERCURY IN FISH

Information for:

- Women who are pregnant or might become pregnant
- Women who are breastfeeding
- Children under 6 years old



Fish are nutritious and good for you to eat. Most fish are safe to eat. But some fish may contain a dangerous chemical called mercury. If you eat the wrong kinds of fish, or too much fish, you can get mercury in your body. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, mercury can harm your baby, too.

Can I eat the fish from stores or restaurants?

Most fish that you buy in stores or restaurants are very safe. But even these fish may contain mercury. For all fish and shellfish you buy, follow the guidelines shown in the table.

What about fish that family or friends catch?

Fish from some areas of California have mercury or other chemicals in them. These areas have warnings called “health advisories.” Health advisories tell you the kinds and amounts of fish that are safe to eat. Always follow the health advisory for the areas where your fish were caught. If there is no advisory, follow the guidelines shown in the table.

What about children?

Mercury can harm children, too. There are special guidelines for children less than 6 years old. Be sure to follow these guidelines, shown in the table.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR EATING FISH

DO NOT EAT shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel.

PREGNANT WOMEN, BREASTFEEDING WOMEN, AND WOMEN WHO MIGHT BECOME PREGNANT

Fish You Buy in a Store or Restaurant

You can eat up to **1 POUND** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish and shellfish bought in stores or restaurants.

1 POUND of uncooked fish is the same as **12 OUNCES** of cooked fish.

Canned tuna is cooked fish, so you can eat up to 2 cans (6-ounce size) of tuna per week.

OR

Fish Caught by Friends or Family

Follow health advisories for areas where fish were caught.

If there are no health advisories, you can eat:

- up to **1/2 POUND** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish caught in **lakes, rivers, reservoirs, or streams** (fresh water)

OR

- up to **1 POUND** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish caught in the **ocean or bays** (saltwater)

CHILDREN LESS THAN 6 YEARS OLD

Fish You Buy in a Store or Restaurant

Children less than 6 years old can eat up to **6 OUNCES** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish and shellfish from stores or restaurants.

OR

Fish Caught by Friends or Family

Follow health advisories for areas where fish were caught.

If there are no health advisories, children less than 6 years old can eat:

- up to **3 OUNCES** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish caught in **lakes, rivers, reservoirs, or streams** (fresh water)

OR

- up to **6 OUNCES** (weight before cooking) **PER WEEK** of fish caught in the **ocean or bays** (saltwater)

How do you know how much fish you can eat?

- 3 ounces of fish is about the size of a deck of cards.
- 8 ounces or 1/2 pound of uncooked fish is about the size of a thin paperback book.
- You can eat fish from a store or restaurant **and** fish caught by friends or family in the same week, but do not add the recommended amounts. For example, if you eat 1/2 pound of fish caught in the ocean by friends or family, do not eat more than 1/2 pound of fish from a restaurant that same week.
- If you eat more than the recommended amount of fish in a week, eat less than the recommended amount the next week.

Tips for lowering mercury from the fish you eat:

- Eat store-bought catfish, salmon, shrimp, and scallops which have little or no mercury.
- Eat different kinds of fish.
- If you eat canned tuna, eat chunk or chunk light tuna which has less mercury than albacore (solid white or chunk white) tuna.
- Never eat the guts of the fish.
- Eat smaller fish rather than larger fish because they generally have less mercury.
- Because cleaning and cooking fish will not get rid of the mercury, be sure to follow the guidelines and advisories.

Planning to become pregnant?

Begin following the safety guidelines 1 year before becoming pregnant, if possible. This gives your body time to get rid of mercury from fish you have already eaten.