

HOW DOES MERCURY GET INTO FISH?

Mercury comes from natural sources and from pollution in streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans. It can build up in fish — and people — over time.

Fish and shellfish take in mercury from the water they live in and the food they eat.

IS MERCURY IN SEAFOOD HARMFUL TO PEOPLE?

Most adults are not harmed by the mercury in the seafood they eat.

Some fish and shellfish have high amounts of mercury that may be harmful to children.

High levels of mercury may harm an unborn baby or child's developing nervous system, brain, and ability to learn.

WHO SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT EATING SEAFOOD?

The following people should avoid eating some types of seafood and eat fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury:

- Women who may become pregnant
- Pregnant women
- Nursing mothers
- Young children
- Infants



Brock Scott/www.scottphoto.net



FISH AND SHELLFISH ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF A HEALTHY DIET.

- They are a good source of protein.
- They are low in 'bad' fat and high in 'good' fat.
- Seafood promotes a healthy heart and normal brain development in children.

For more health information:

- **Pennsylvania Department of Health:**
717-787-1708, www.health.state.pa.us
- **Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission:**
814-359-5147, www.fish.state.pa.us
- **Pennsylvania Sea Grant:**
215-806-0894, www.pserie.psu.edu/seagrant
- **Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control:** 302-739-9902
www.dnrec.state.de.us/fw/advisory.htm
- **Delaware Health and Social Services Division of Public Health:** 302-744-4704

This brochure is a collaborative effort of:



Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control



Delaware Health and Social Services Division of Public Health



Partnership for the Delaware Estuary



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection



Pennsylvania Department of Health



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission



Philadelphia County Nutrition Links



Pennsylvania Sea Grant



Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition



Temple University



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MERCURY IN FISH & SHELLFISH



An Important Safety Message for:

**Women Who Might Become Pregnant
Pregnant Women
Nursing Mothers
Infants & Children**

SEAFOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND INFANTS

1

Do not eat:

- Shark
- Swordfish
- King Mackerel
- Tilefish

They contain high levels of mercury.

Mercury in canned tuna:



Light tuna is *low* in mercury. Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) per week.



Albacore tuna (also called *white* tuna) has *more* mercury than *light* tuna. You may eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna per week.

2

Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury.

Popular low mercury seafood available in the market includes:

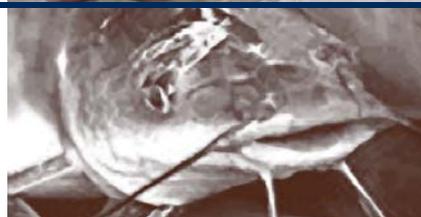
■ Salmon



■ Shrimp



■ Farm Raised Catfish



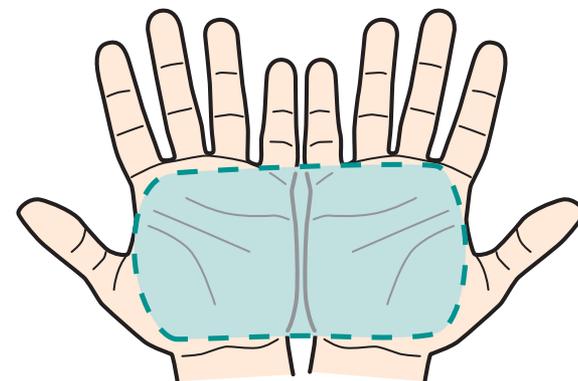
■ Talapia



3

If you eat fish from local waters:

- Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas.
- If no advice is available, eat no more than 6 ounces (one average meal) per week.



A 6-ounce portion is the size of two palms of your hand.

By following these three recommendations, women, children, and infants will receive the benefits of eating fish and shellfish without eating harmful amounts of mercury.