

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

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
- planning to have a baby within a year
- 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 per week.
- Select certain fish from the market more often than others (See Table 1).
- Do not eat swordfish or shark.
- For fish caught in Connecticut waters:
 - Eat no more than one meal per month of freshwater fish.
 - Do 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 elevated levels of certain contaminants, especially mercury.

In general, pregnant women and younger children should not eat more than 2 fish meals a week from the market or restaurants. These meals should come from a variety of species, including canned tuna. When buying canned tuna, you should look for "light" tuna; it has less mercury than "white" tuna. Certain fish such as swordfish or shark should not be eaten at all.



General Consumption Guidelines for Fish from the Market

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

The chart below indicates which fish to choose more often as part of the 2 meals per week advice.

Table 1

Eat More of These	Eat Less of These
✓ Tilapia*	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna Steak
✓ Haddock	<input type="checkbox"/> Halibut
✓ Light Tuna <small>(canned)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> White Tuna <small>(canned)</small>
✓ Sardines	Eat None of These
✓ Salmon*	X Tilefish
✓ Flounder*	X Swordfish
✓ Cod	X Shark
✓ Atlantic Mackerel	X King Mackerel
✓ Pollock	X Striped Bass
✓ Shellfish <small>(oysters, shrimp, clams, scallops, lobster)</small>	X Bluefish

- ✓ Eat more of these species
- Eat less of these species
- X Do not eat any of these species
- * Species especially low in contaminants and can be eaten more than twice a week

Eating Locally Caught Fish Safely

- Look for orange 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 most trout that are no bigger than 15 inches long. 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, white suckers, sunfish).



Which Locally Caught Fish Should I Avoid Eating

Table 2

Pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant in the next year, nursing mothers, and young children should NOT eat the following 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	Brewster Pond, Stratford
Carp, Catfish	Catfish, Bullhead
Housatonic River	Union Pond, Manchester
Trout, Carp, Catfish, Bass, White Perch, Eels, Northern Pike	Bass, Carp, Catfish
Quinnipiac River (above the gorge)	Dodge Pond, East Lyme
All species	Bass, Pickerel
Hanover Pond, Meriden	Silver Lake, Meriden
All species	Bass, Pickerel
Wyassup Lake, Stonington	Lake McDonough, Barkhamstead
Bass, Pickerel	Bass, Pickerel

Background on Contaminants

Certain fish in Connecticut rivers, lakes and Long Island Sound contain mercury, PCBs or chlordane. In addition, certain types of fish bought in stores and restaurants have elevated levels of mercury. 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 affected. That is why it is important for pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant, and nursing mothers to follow this advice.



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