

Advice about Eating Fish

For Those Who Might Become or Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding and Children Ages 1 - 11 Years



FDA and EPA have issued **advice regarding eating fish**[‡].

This advice can help those who might become or are pregnant or breastfeeding as well as parents and caregivers who are feeding children make informed choices when it comes to the types of fish that are nutritious and safe to eat. This advice supports the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>).

The advice features a **[chart \(/media/102331/download?attachment\)](#)** that makes it easy to choose dozens of healthy and safe options and includes information about the nutritional value of fish. A set of **[frequently asked](#)**


[questions & answers \(/food/consumers/questions-answers-fdaepa-advice-about-eating-fish-those-who-might-become-or-are-pregnant-or\)](/food/consumers/questions-answers-fdaepa-advice-about-eating-fish-those-who-might-become-or-are-pregnant-or) provides more information on how to use the chart and additional tips for eating fish.

‡*This advice refers to fish and shellfish collectively as “fish.”*

Read the full advice below or [download in PDF \(/media/102331/download?attachment\)](/media/102331/download?attachment).

This chart can help you choose which fish to eat, and how often to eat them, based on their mercury levels.

What is a serving? As a guide, use the palm of your hand.




Pregnancy and breastfeeding:
1 serving is 4 ounces

Eat 2 to 3 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list (OR 1 serving from the “Good Choices” list).

Childhood:
On average, a serving is about:

- 1 ounce at age 1 to 3
- 2 ounces at age 4 to 7
- 3 ounces at age 8 to 10
- 4 ounces at age 11


Eat 2 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list.




Best Choices			Good Choices		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop	Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Atlantic croaker	Lobster, American and spiny	Shad	Buffalofish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Atlantic mackerel	Mullet	Shrimp	Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Black sea bass	Oyster	Skate	Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish	Sheepshead	Weakfish/seatrout
Butterfish	Pacific chub mackerel	Smelt	Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/Pacific croaker
Catfish	Perch, freshwater and ocean	Sole	Halibut	Spanish mackerel	
Clam	Pickrel	Squid	Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Striped bass (ocean)	
Cod	Plaice	Tilapia	Choices to Avoid HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS		
Crab	Pollock	Trout, freshwater	King mackerel	Shark	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
Crawfish	Salmon	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)	Marlin	Swordfish	Tuna, bigeye
Flounder	Sardine	Whitefish	Orange roughy		
Haddock		Whiting			
Hake					

What about fish caught by family or friends? Check for [fish and shellfish advisories](#) to tell you how often you can safely eat those fish. If there is no advisory, eat only one serving and no other fish that week. Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants.

www.FDA.gov/fishadvice
www.EPA.gov/fishadvice



 U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION



 United States Environmental Protection Agency

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[Supporting Materials | Education Resources for Consumers and Educators \(/food/consumers/resources-use-fdaepas-fish-advice\)](/food/consumers/resources-use-fdaepas-fish-advice)

En español and Additional Translations



Fish provide **key nutrients** that support a child's **brain development**.

[Learn which nutrients in fish support child development](#)



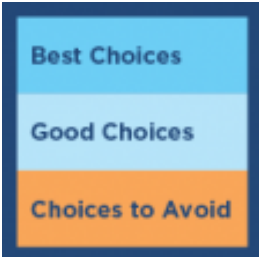
Eating fish can provide other **health benefits** too.

[Learn more about health benefits](#)



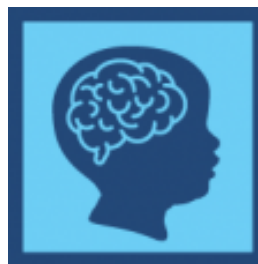
The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* **recommends eating fish** as part of a **healthy eating pattern**.

[Learn more about Dietary Guidelines and fish](#)



Choose a variety of fish that are **lower in mercury**.

[Learn which fish are lower in mercury](#)



Fish provide key nutrients that support a child's brain development.

Fish are part of a healthy eating pattern (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>) and provide key nutrients during pregnancy, breastfeeding, and/or early childhood to support a **child's brain development**:

- Omega-3 (called DHA and EPA) and omega-6 fats
- Iron
- Iodine (during pregnancy)
- Choline

Choline also supports development of the **baby's spinal cord**. Fish provide iron and zinc to support **children's immune systems**. Fish are a source of other nutrients like protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and selenium too.



Eating fish can provide other health benefits too.

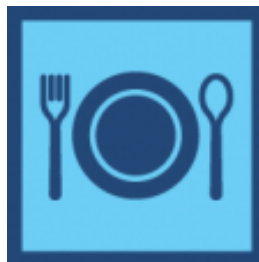
Fish intake during pregnancy is recommended because moderate scientific evidence shows it can help your baby's cognitive development.

Strong evidence shows that eating fish, as part of a healthy eating pattern, **may have heart health benefits**.

A **healthy eating pattern** consists of choices across all food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods, which includes fish), eaten in recommended amounts, and within calorie needs. Healthy eating patterns include foods that provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

Healthy eating patterns (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>) that include fish may have other benefits too. Moderate scientific evidence shows that eating patterns relatively higher in fish but also in other foods, including vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, lean meats and poultry, nuts, and unsaturated vegetable oils, and lower in red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, and refined grains are associated with:

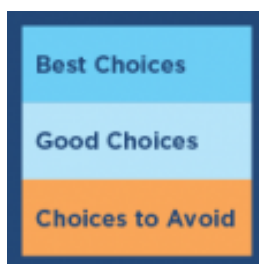
- **Promotion of bone health – decreases the risk for hip fractures***
- **Decreases in the risk of becoming overweight or obese***
- **Decreases in the risk for colon and rectal cancers***



The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends eating fish as part of a healthy eating pattern.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>) recommends:

- At least 8 ounces of seafood (less for children§) per week based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
- Those who are pregnant or breastfeeding consume between **8 and 12 ounces per week** of a variety of seafood from choices that are **lower in mercury**.



Choose a variety of fish that are lower in mercury.

While it is important to limit mercury in the diets of those who are pregnant or breastfeeding and children, many types of fish are both nutritious and lower in mercury.

This chart can help you choose which fish to eat, and how often to eat them, based on their mercury levels.

What is a serving? As a guide, use the palm of your hand.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

1 serving is 4 ounces

Eat 2 to 3 servings a week from the "Best

Choices" list

(OR 1 serving from the "Good Choices" list).



Childhood:

On average, a serving is about:

- 1 ounce at age 1 to 3
- 2 ounces at age 4 to 7
- 3 ounces at age 8 to 10
- 4 ounces at age 11



Eat 2 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list.

Best Choices			Good Choices		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop	Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Atlantic croaker	Lobster, American and spiny	Shad	Buffalofish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Atlantic mackerel	Mullet	Shrimp	Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Black sea bass	Oyster	Skate	Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish	Sheepshead	Weakfish/seatrout
Butterfish	Pacific chub mackerel	Smelt	Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/Pacific croaker
Catfish	Perch, freshwater and ocean	Sole	Halibut	Spanish mackerel	
Clam	Sardine	Squid	Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Striped bass (ocean)	
Cod	Pickereel	Tilapia			
Crab	Plaice	Trout, freshwater	Choices to Avoid HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS		
Crawfish	Pollock	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)	King mackerel	Shark	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
Flounder	Salmon	Whitefish	Marlin	Swordfish	Tuna, bigeye
Haddock	Sardine	Whiting	Orange roughy		

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What about fish caught by family or friends? Check for fish and shellfish advisories

(<https://fishadvisoryonline.epa.gov/Contacts.aspx>) to tell you how often you can safely eat those fish. If there is no advisory, eat only one serving and no other fish that week. Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants.

This advice supports the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>), which reflects current science on nutrition to improve public health. The *Dietary Guidelines for*

Americans focuses on dietary patterns and the effects of food and nutrient characteristics on health.

* There is moderate scientific evidence of a relationship (<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/2020-advisory-committee-report>) between the eating pattern as a whole and the potential health benefit.

§ For some children, the amounts of fish in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are higher than in this FDA/EPA advice. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* states that to consume those higher amounts, children should only be fed fish from the “Best Choices” list that are even lower in mercury – these fish are anchovies, Atlantic mackerel, catfish, clams, crab, crawfish, flounder, haddock, mullet, oysters, plaice, pollock, salmon, sardines, scallops, shad, shrimp, sole, squid, tilapia, trout, and whiting.

Advice revised October 2021

▼ **Supporting Information**

- [Questions & Answers \(/food/consumers/questions-answers-fdaepa-advice-about-eating-fish-those-who-might-become-or-are-pregnant-or\)](/food/consumers/questions-answers-fdaepa-advice-about-eating-fish-those-who-might-become-or-are-pregnant-or)
- [Technical Information on Development of the Advice about Eating Fish \(/food/metals/technical-information-development-fish-consumption-advice-fdaepa-advice-what-pregnant-women-and\)](/food/metals/technical-information-development-fish-consumption-advice-fdaepa-advice-what-pregnant-women-and)
- [FDA and EPA's Response to External Peer Review on the FDA-EPA's Technical Information \(/files/science & research/published/FDA-and-EPA's-Response-to-External-Peer-Review-on-the-FDA-EPA's-Technical-Information-on-the-Development-of-Fish-Consumption-Advice.pdf\)](/files/science%20&%20research/published/FDA-and-EPA's-Response-to-External-Peer-Review-on-the-FDA-EPA's-Technical-Information-on-the-Development-of-Fish-Consumption-Advice.pdf)
- [External Peer Review Report of FDA-EPA's Technical Information \(/files/science & research/published/External-Peer-Review-Report-of\)](/files/science%20&%20research/published/External-Peer-Review-Report-of)

FDA-EPA's-Technical-Information-on-Development-of-of-Fish-Consumption-Advice.pdf)

- **FDA Closer to Zero Action Plan (/food/environmental-contaminants-food/closer-zero-reducing-childhood-exposure-contaminants-foods)**

✓ Text Versions of the Best Choices, Good Choices, and Choices to Avoid Lists of Fish

Fish	Best Choice, Good Choice, or Choice to Avoid?
Anchovy	Best Choice
Atlantic croaker	Best Choice
Atlantic mackerel	Best Choice
Black sea bass	Best Choice
Butterfish	Best Choice
Catfish	Best Choice
Clam	Best Choice
Cod	Best Choice
Crab	Best Choice
Crawfish	Best Choice
Flounder	Best Choice
Haddock	Best Choice
Hake	Best Choice
Herring	Best Choice
Lobster, American and spiny	Best Choice

Fish	Best Choice, Good Choice, or Choice to Avoid?
Mullet	Best Choice
Oyster	Best Choice
Pacific chub mackerel	Best Choice
Perch, freshwater and ocean	Best Choice
Pickrel	Best Choice
Plaice	Best Choice
Pollock	Best Choice
Salmon	Best Choice
Sardine	Best Choice
Scallop	Best Choice
Shad	Best Choice
Shrimp	Best Choice
Skate	Best Choice
Smelt	Best Choice
Sole	Best Choice
Squid	Best Choice
Tilapia	Best Choice
Trout, freshwater	Best Choice
Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)	Best Choice
Whitefish	Best Choice
Whiting	Best Choice

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Bluefish	Good Choice
Buffalofish	Good Choice
Carp	Good Choice
Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish	Good Choice
Grouper	Good Choice
Halibut	Good Choice
Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Good Choice
Monkfish	Good Choice
Rockfish	Good Choice
Sablefish	Good Choice
Sheepshead	Good Choice
Snapper	Good Choice
Spanish mackerel	Good Choice
Striped bass (ocean)	Good Choice
Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)	Good Choice
Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen	Good Choice
Tuna, yellowfin	Good Choice
Weakfish/seatrout	Good Choice
White croaker/Pacific croaker	Good Choice
King mackerel	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS

Fish	Best Choice, Good Choice, or Choice to Avoid?
Marlin	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS
Orange roughy	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS
Shark	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS
Swordfish	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS
Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS
Tuna, bigeye	Choice to Avoid: HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS

▼ En español

[Consejos sobre el consumo de pescado \(/media/141562/download?attachment\)](/media/141562/download?attachment)

[Embarazo y lactancia: El Consumo de Pescado \(Infografía\) \(/media/154072/download?attachment\)](/media/154072/download?attachment)

[Niños: El Consumo de Pescado \(Infografía\) \(/media/154073/download?attachment\)](/media/154073/download?attachment)

[Kit de herramientas para redes sociales: Consejos de la FDA y la EPA sobre el consumo de pescado \(/food/consumers/kit-de-herramientas-para-redes-sociales-consejos-de-la-fda-y-la-epa-sobre-el-consumo-de-pescado\)](/food/consumers/kit-de-herramientas-para-redes-sociales-consejos-de-la-fda-y-la-epa-sobre-el-consumo-de-pescado)

[El consumo de pescado: una guía para las familias hispanoamericanas \(/food/consumers/phonovels-hispanic-american-and-chinese-american-families-advice-about-eating-fish\)](/food/consumers/phonovels-hispanic-american-and-chinese-american-families-advice-about-eating-fish)

[Seguridad de los alimentos para mujeres embarazadas, sus bebés por nacer y niños menores de cinco años \(/media/143171/download?attachment\)](/media/143171/download?attachment)

Versiones de texto de las mejores opciones, buenas opciones y opciones a evitar listas de peces

PESCADO	Mejores opciones, Buenas opciones, o Opciones a evitar
Almeja	Mejores opciones
Arenque	Mejores opciones
Atún, enlatado claro (incluye el bonito)	Mejores opciones
Bacalao	Mejores opciones
Bagre o pez gato	Mejores opciones
Boquerón o anchoa	Mejores opciones
Caballa	Mejores opciones
Caballa del Pacífico	Mejores opciones
Calamar	Mejores opciones
Camarón	Mejores opciones
Cangrejo	Mejores opciones
Cangrejo de río	Mejores opciones
Corvina	Mejores opciones
Eglefino	Mejores opciones
Eperlano	Mejores opciones
Gado o abadejo	Mejores opciones
Langosta, americana o espinosa	Mejores opciones
Lenguado	Mejores opciones

PESCADO	Mejores opciones, Buenas opciones, o Opciones a evitar
Lisa o pargo	Mejores opciones
Lucio	Mejores opciones
Merlán o pescadilla	Mejores opciones
Merluza	Mejores opciones
Ostra	Mejores opciones
Palometa	Mejores opciones
Perca, de agua dulce y de mar	Mejores opciones
Pescado blanco	Mejores opciones
Platija o lenguado	Mejores opciones
Raya	Mejores opciones
Róbalo	Mejores opciones
Sábalo	Mejores opciones
Salmón	Mejores opciones
Sardina	Mejores opciones
Solla	Mejores opciones
Tilapia	Mejores opciones
Trucha, de agua dulce	Mejores opciones
Vieira	Mejores opciones
Anjova	Buenas opciones
Atún, albacora/blanco, enlatado y fresco/congelado	Buenas opciones

PESCADO	Mejores opciones, Buenas opciones, o Opciones a evitar
Atún, aleta amarilla	Buenas opciones
Bacalao negro	Buenas opciones
Bagre búfalo (o bagre boca chica)	Buenas opciones
Blanquillo o lofolátilo (Océano Atlántico)	Buenas opciones
Caballa española	Buenas opciones
Carpa	Buenas opciones
Chopa	Buenas opciones
Corvina blanca/Corvina del Pacífico	Buenas opciones
Corvinata real/trucha de mar	Buenas opciones
Dorado/pez delfín	Buenas opciones
Halibut o fletán	Buenas opciones
Lubina rayada (del mar)	Buenas opciones
Lutjánido o pargo	Buenas opciones
Mero	Buenas opciones
Perca de mar chilena/Merluza negra	Buenas opciones
Pez roca	Buenas opciones
Rape	Buenas opciones
Atún de ojos grandes o patudo	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio

PESCADO	Mejores opciones, Buenas opciones, o Opciones a evitar
Blanquillo o lofolátilo (Golfo de México)	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio
Macarela rey o caballa	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio
Pez aguja o marlin	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio
Pez espada	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio
Reloj anaranjado, raya o pez emperador	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio
Tiburón	Opciones a evitar: los más altos niveles de mercurio

▼ **Additional Translations**

[Translations of Fish Names \(/media/157646/download?attachment\)](/media/157646/download?attachment)

[عربي \(Arabic\) \(/media/141555/download?attachment\)](/media/141555/download?attachment)

[简体中文 \(Chinese, Simplified\) \(/media/141556/download?attachment\)](/media/141556/download?attachment)

[中國傳統 \(Chinese, Traditional\) \(/media/157647/download?attachment\)](/media/157647/download?attachment)

[Français \(French\) \(/media/141557/download?attachment\)](/media/141557/download?attachment)

[Hmoob \(Hmong\) \(/media/141558/download?attachment\)](/media/141558/download?attachment)

[ខ្មែរ \(Khmer\) \(/media/141559/download?attachment\)](/media/141559/download?attachment)

[한국어 \(Korean\) \(/media/141560/download?attachment\)](/media/141560/download?attachment)

[Português \(Portuguese\) \(/media/141561/download?attachment\)](/media/141561/download?attachment)

[Tagalog \(Tagalog\) \(/media/141563/download?attachment\)](/media/141563/download?attachment)

[Tiếng Việt \(Vietnamese\) \(/media/141564/download?attachment\)](/media/141564/download?attachment)

[Resources to Use FDA/EPA's Fish Advice \(/food/consumers/resources-use-fdaepas-fish-advice\)](/food/consumers/resources-use-fdaepas-fish-advice)

Was this helpful?