

"Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face."
- Victor Hugo

Since it's May and I had to turn my heat back on last week, this quote seemed pretty appropriate. It's even more appropriate because several people in my life are going through difficult times and that's often when laughter can truly be the best medicine. So if you have friends who are struggling right now, pick up the phone and let them know they're in your thoughts. While you're at it, tell them a funny story. Trust me, you'll make their day. With warmer weather hopefully upon us, more and more of us will be grilling out and one of the top choices for that grill is fish. Most fish is really good for you, but unfortunately, like so many of the foods we eat, some can be quite toxic. Read below to learn the best fish to eat. While you're at it, reach out and let me help you get on the path to wellness this summer.

Yours in health,



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Which Fish Should I Eat?



HIGH MERCURY 

EAT THREE SERVINGS OR LESS PER MONTH:

Bluefish	Mackerel	Tuna
Grouper*	(Spanish, Gulf)	(Canned Albacore)
	Sea Bass (Chilean)*	Tuna (Yellowfin)*

HIGHEST MERCURY 

AVOID EATING:

Mackerel (King)	Shark*	Tuna
Marlin*	Swordfish*	(Bigeye, Ahi)*
Orange Roughy*	Tilapia*	

***Fish in Trouble!** These fish are perilously low in numbers or are caught using environmentally destructive methods.

I love fish. It's a staple at our house and we tend to eat it at least two to three times a week. It's full of protein and good fat, two important nutrients for our daily diets. But there are some fish that are better avoided altogether or eaten in moderation. Why? Because some types of fish contain toxic levels of mercury, which are harmful to your body. Here are the fish with the lowest levels of mercury that are safe to put on your dinner table:

- Salmon – filled with lots of good omega 3 fats
- Shrimp – you may have heard to avoid it because it has cholesterol. Like eggs, do not fear. You can't raise your cholesterol by eating foods with cholesterol.
- Tilapia
- Scallops
- Oysters
- Squid (domestic)

There are other fish that are safe to eat, but just not quite as safe. The fish listed below have low levels of mercury. Eat them, but eat them less frequently than those on the list above.

- Haddock

- Flounder
- Sole
- Catfish
- Trout
- Crabs
- Crawfish (domestic)

Some of my favorite types of fish are unfortunately, the ones that really should be avoided because of their very high mercury content. Even my least favorite governmental agency recommends staying away from the first four.

- Swordfish
- Shark
- King Mackerel
- Tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico
- Tuna (including canned). Yellowfin and ahi, which are frequently used in sushi, have particularly high levels of mercury.
- Orange Roughy/Grouper
- Chilean Sea Bass/Halibut
- Sablefish (also known as black cod)

I love swordfish, but I quit eating it when I got pregnant. Since then, I think I've had it once since my son was born. Chilean sea bass is one of my favorites. In fact, I just had it for Mother's Day dinner last night.

When it comes to shellfish, it's important to follow local alerts about the timing of when it can be safely caught and consumed. Most people know that eating raw shellfish can carry the risk of making you sick, so choose your source wisely. It's not recommended for vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women for that very reason. You may also want to check with your state's health department for information about PCBs, another toxin found in many fish. It's probably worth researching the fish listed above if you're concerned about PCBs. Buying wild rather than farmed fish will help, but it's no guarantee.

The safe limit for methylmercury, the form of mercury that builds up in fish, is set at 0.1 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day by the EPA. This translates to 5.8 micrograms per liter of blood. However, that guideline was set over 10 years ago. Many scientists and consumer safety experts think this number should be lowered since adverse effects can occur at lower mercury blood levels.

Consumer Reports analyzed average mercury levels in some FDA data and found that a 125-pound woman would exceed the EPA's "safe" mercury consumption limit by eating just 4 ounces of albacore tuna. This amount would be about the size of a deck of cards. It appears that canned light tuna has lower levels of mercury than albacore. However, that doesn't mean it's a good choice.

When you eat seafood that contains methylmercury, more than 95% of it will be absorbed and passed into your bloodstream. Once there, it can penetrate the cells in any organ or tissue in your body. That's not good. There are foods that can help detoxify your body from these dangerous metals. One of those is organic cilantro, which I try to keep in my refrigerator.

Many people have mercury poisoning (from numerous sources including fish, amalgam fillings and vaccines) and don't know it. Chelation therapy is often needed to help remove mercury and other toxic metals from your body. I'm now researching ways to help detoxify our bodies. I expect that will be a future article.

I hope all you moms out there had a fantastic Mother's Day. Have a wonderful month.