

## What about canned tuna?

Canned tuna contains lower levels of mercury than fresh and frozen tuna. This is because smaller types of tuna are used for canning. When purchasing canned tuna, choose "light" tuna more often than "white" or "albacore" tuna, because it has less mercury.

Remember:  
**LIGHT** tuna  
is **LOWER**  
in mercury

## What about salmon?

Salmon is very high in omega-3s and low in mercury. However, there has been some concern about the level of PCBs (a type of pollutant) in salmon. If you follow the guide provided here, and include a variety of fish in your diet, your level of exposure to PCBs should be acceptable for both farmed and wild salmon.

When possible, choose wild salmon more often than farmed salmon, because it is lower in PCBs. Canned salmon is generally wild.

## What about raw fish?

Pregnant women should not consume any raw fish, including that found in sashimi and some sushi dishes. Raw fish may contain bacteria or parasites that can lead to illness and/or fetal complications. In addition, sashimi and sushi dishes often contain fresh or frozen tuna, which are high in mercury.

*Remember, it is important to include fish in a healthy diet. York Region Community and Health Services advises women to continue to eat fish during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, because of the many benefits it provides.*

**The key is to eat a variety of fish  
and to choose wisely.**



## A GUIDE to EATING FISH

for women, children and families



### Additional resources

*A Guide to Eating Fish*  
York Region Community and Health Services, 2008  
[www.york.ca/fishguide](http://www.york.ca/fishguide)

*Nutrition Matters – Omega-3 fats: Reel in the benefits!*  
York Region Community and Health Services, 2008  
[www.york.ca/fishguide](http://www.york.ca/fishguide)

*Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*  
Health Canada, 2007  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

*The 2007-2008 Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish*  
Ontario Ministry of the Environment, 2007  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/guide/)

For information on health-related topics, please call York Region

Health Connection at  
**1-800-361-5653**  
or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

**York Region**

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**Health Canada recommends eating at  
least two Canada's Food Guide Servings  
of fish each week that are high in  
omega-3 fatty acids and low in mercury.**

**York Region**

Fish is an excellent source of protein and other nutrients that are important to a healthy diet. However, certain types of fish may contain levels of mercury that can be harmful to your health.

This guide is designed to help women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, women who might become pregnant, and people who are caring for infants and children, make healthy fish choices.

### Is fish good for my health?

**Yes.** Besides being an excellent source of protein, many types of fish are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids (omega-3s).

One type of omega-3, called DHA, helps to develop the brain and eyes of fetuses, infants and children. It may also improve language skills and coordination in infants and children.

It is especially important that the following people eat a variety of fish to get DHA:

- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Women who might become pregnant
- Infants and children

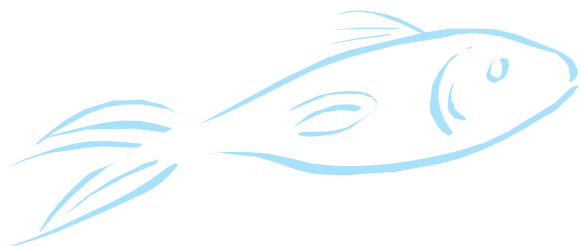
Breastfed babies can get DHA through breast milk if the mother includes DHA in her diet.

**Omega-3s are important at all ages, to reduce the risk of heart disease**

### What about mercury in fish and shellfish?

Nearly all fish and shellfish contain mercury, but some types contain much higher levels than others and are more of a concern. Exposure to high amounts of mercury can be harmful, especially for pregnant women, infants and children.

Fetuses and infants exposed to high levels of mercury may experience delays in walking, talking, memory and attention span. High levels of mercury can be toxic for children and adults, and can increase their risk of heart disease.



# EAT a VARIETY of FISH and CHOOSE WISELY

One Canada's Food Guide Serving of fish is 75 grams or 2.5 ounces or about ½ a cup.

## Choose OFTEN

(low mercury fish)

- **2 servings a week** for infants and children\*
- **4 servings a week** for women and teenagers
- **Unlimited servings a week** for women aged 50+ and men

- Anchovies Ω
- Arctic Char Ω
- Clams
- Cod
- Flounder
- Haddock
- Herring Ω
- Kamaboko
- Mackerel, Atlantic or Pacific Ω
- Mussels
- Octopus
- Oysters
- Pollock
- Prawns
- Salmon Ω
- Sardines Ω
- Scallops
- Shrimp
- Smelt Ω
- Sole
- Squid
- Tilapia
- Trout, Rainbow Ω
- Tuna, Canned Light
- Whelk

## Choose SOMETIMES

(medium mercury fish)

- **1-2 servings a month** for infants and children\*
- **2-4 servings a week** for women and teenagers
- **4 servings a week** for women aged 50+ and men

- Black Cod
- Catfish
- Crab
- Crawfish
- Croaker
- Dolphin Fish
- Eel
- Grouper
- Hake
- Halibut
- Lobster
- Mackerel, King or Spanish Ω
- Mahi Mahi
- Perch
- Sablefish
- Skate
- Snapper
- Striped Bass Ω
- Sturgeon
- Trout, Lake Ω
- Tuna, Canned White or Albacore
- Turbot
- Whitefish
- Whiting

## AVOID or Choose RARELY

(high mercury fish)

- **Less than 1 serving a month** for women, teenagers and children\*
- **1 serving a week** for women aged 50+ and men

- Barracuda
- Escolar Ω
- Marlin
- Orange Roughy
- Pickeral
- Pike
- Sea Bass
- Shark
- Snake Mackerel Ω
- Swordfish
- Tilefish
- Tuna, Fresh or Frozen
- Walleye

Ω These fish have higher levels of omega-3s, which are important to health.

### \* Infants and Children

- Fish can be introduced into the diet of infants between 6-12 months of age if the infant is at low risk for developing food allergies.
- If your child weighs less than 16.5 kilograms or approximately 36 pounds, you may choose to reduce the serving size.

These guidelines apply only to fish bought at the market or store. For information on fish caught in local lakes or streams, visit the Ministry of the Environment's *Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish*