

**EMBARGOED UNTIL:** 6 AM, ET, Thursday, August 21, 2014

**CONTACT:** Naomi Starkman 917.539.3924  
[nstarkman@gmail.com](mailto:nstarkman@gmail.com)

or

Douglas Love 914.378.2437  
[dlove@consumer.org](mailto:dlove@consumer.org)

## **CONSUMER REPORTS REVEALS LOW-MERCURY FISH CHOICES**

**Analysis finds eating certain species could put consumers at higher risk for mercury exposure;  
CR advises pregnant women not to eat tuna at all**

YONKERS, NY — Consumer Reports released its own analysis of the most recent government data on mercury in fish, found that it continues to be critical for consumers to pay close attention to the fish they consume, and has updated its advice for consumers.

Two federal agencies recently recommended that because fish is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and other nutrients, women of child-bearing age and young children should eat more lower-mercury fish. While Consumer Reports (CR) agrees that eating fish can be healthy, it analyzed Food and Drug Administration (FDA) data to determine its own recommendations for lower-mercury options. Getting too much mercury can damage the brain and nervous system.

“We’re particularly concerned about canned tuna, which is second only to shrimp as the most commonly eaten seafood in the United States. We encourage pregnant women to avoid all tuna,” said Jean Halloran, director of food policy initiatives for Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports.

Last June, for the first time, the FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set a firm minimum level for weekly fish consumption, including shellfish. The federal proposal encourages women who are pregnant, breast-feeding or trying to become pregnant to eat between 8 and 12 ounces of fish per week, and for children, it suggests a minimum weekly quota dependent on their age and nutritional needs.

Consumer Reports analyzed the FDA’s own data that measures mercury levels in various types of seafood and found almost 20 seafood choices that can be eaten several times per week, even by pregnant women and young children, without worrying about mercury exposure. In fact, for women who are pregnant or nursing, fish can also contain an important fuel for a baby’s brain development. Fish with the lowest mercury levels includes salmon (Alaskan or other wild), scallops, shrimp (most wild and U.S. farmed), tilapia and more; low-mercury options include catfish, crab, flounder and sole (flatfish), and trout.

The full report, “The Great Fish Debate” is featured in the October 2014 issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine and is available at [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org).

### **What Consumers Can Do**

Other than the new advice on the minimum weekly fish consumption, most of the other federal recommendations are essentially the same ones given in 2004. The agencies advise that young children and women of child-bearing age avoid four fish with the highest mercury levels: swordfish, shark, king mackerel, and tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico. They are also considering adding marlin and orange roughy to that list.

While Consumer Reports agrees that those groups should avoid high-mercury seafood, the organization disagrees with the latest recommendations from the FDA and EPA on how much tuna women and children may eat—and believes pregnant women should avoid eating any tuna.

Even adults can experience the toxic effects of mercury if they consume too much high-mercury fish. Therefore, Consumer Reports also suggests that anyone who eats 24 ounces (1.5 pounds) or more of fish per week, should also steer clear of high-mercury choices, which includes sushi made with tuna.

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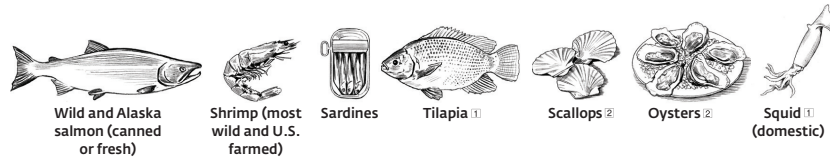
Consumer Reports has put together the following chart that identifies good low-mercury fish choices.

# Good choices if you want more fish

Below are low-mercury fish that anyone can eat frequently. We have also considered environmental and sustainability concerns for these recommended lists, which are a result of our analysis of FDA data. A few fish, such as clams and anchovies, appear to be low in mercury but didn't make our lists because the FDA tested so few samples.

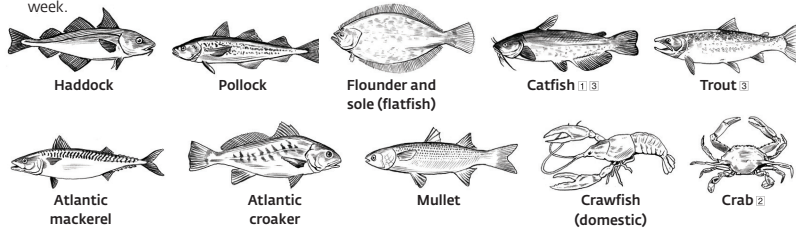
## Lowest-mercury fish

A 132-pound person can safely eat 36 ounces per week. A 44-pound child can safely eat 18 ounces per week.



## Low-mercury fish

A 132-pound person can safely eat up to 18 ounces per week. A 44-pound child can safely eat up to 6 ounces per week.



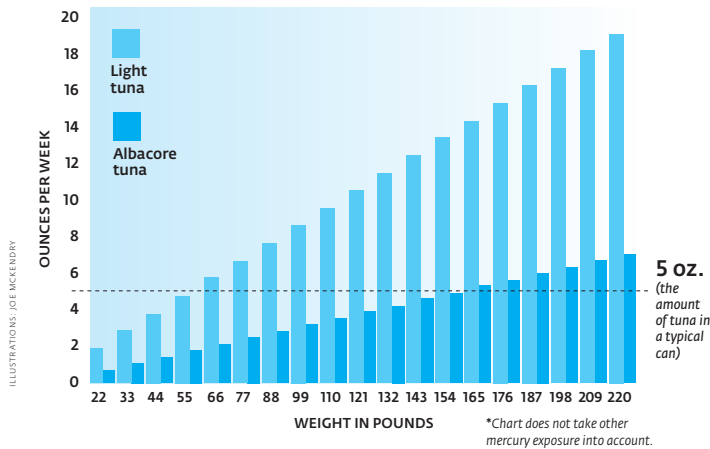
<sup>1</sup> You may want to consider country of origin and choose domestic rather than imported if possible.

<sup>2</sup> Always follow any local alerts regarding when shellfish can be safely harvested and eaten. Eating shellfish raw always carries additional risks of foodborne illness, and it's not recommended for vulnerable groups.

<sup>3</sup> If wild caught (which includes being fished from local rivers and lakes), check with your state health department for information about PCBs especially for these fish; it's a good idea to check for anything on this list if you are concerned about PCBs.

## How much canned tuna can you safely eat?

Ounces of canned tuna that are safe per week by body weight.\*



## Swim away from these

The FDA and EPA say most women and young children should avoid the first four highest-mercury fish below. They're considering adding the last two to the list. If you are a frequent consumer of any type of fish—24 ounces or more per week—CR suggests that you avoid the fish below as well.

Swordfish  
Shark  
King mackerel  
Gulf tilefish  
Marlin  
Orange roughy

To minimize your mercury intake, limit your consumption of these higher-mercury fish.

Groupers  
Chilean sea bass  
Bluefish  
Halibut  
Sablefish (black cod)  
Spanish mackerel (Gulf)  
Fresh tuna (except skipjack)

For more information on Consumer Reports good fish choices and call for action from the FDA and EPA, check out the October 2014 issue of *Consumer Reports*, on newsstands on Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> or online at [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org).

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