



What is mercury?

Mercury is a type of metal found in soil, rock, air, and water. It is used in thermometers, batteries, lamps, and other products. Some industries release mercury into the air, soil, and water.

How can mercury harm my baby?

Mercury can harm your baby when you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Babies born to mothers who have a lot of mercury in their bodies may develop more slowly and have problems learning. Young children can also be harmed by mercury. If you are worried about your child's health, call your doctor.



For information about health advisories, contact:

- Your local health department
County Health Officers can be found at:
www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/home/sites/hdlinks.htm
- California Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment/Pesticide and Environmental Toxicology Section
(916) 327-7319 or (510) 622-3170
www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html
- The California Department of Fish and Game
Fishing Regulations booklet
These are available where you buy your fishing license or at:
www.dfg.ca.gov/enforcement/regs.html
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advisory.html

For information about the fish you buy, contact:

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
(800) SAFEFOOD
www.cfsan.fda.gov/seafood1.html

Gray Davis
Governor
State of California

Grantland Johnson
Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

Diana M. Bonta, R.N., Dr.PH.
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1515 Clay Street, Suite 1700
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www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/deodc/ehib/index.htm

Protecting Yourself and Your Family from



MERCURY IN FISH

Information for:

- Women who are pregnant or might become pregnant
- Women who are breastfeeding
- Children under 6 years old



Fish are nutritious and good for you to eat. Most fish are safe to eat. But some fish may contain a dangerous chemical called mercury. If you eat the wrong kinds of fish, or too much fish, you can get mercury in your body. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, mercury can harm your baby, too.

Can I eat the fish from stores or restaurants?

Most fish that you buy in stores or restaurants are very safe. But even these fish may contain mercury. For all fish and shellfish you buy, follow the guidelines shown in the table.

What about fish that family or friends catch?

Fish from some areas of California have mercury or other chemicals in them. These areas have warnings called "health advisories." Health advisories tell you the kinds and amounts of fish that are safe to eat. Always follow the health advisory for the areas where your fish were caught. If there is no advisory, follow the guidelines shown in the table.

What about children?

Mercury can harm children, too. Follow the health advisories for the areas where your fish were caught. If there are no health advisories, follow the guidelines shown in the table.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR EATING FISH

Follow health advisories for the areas where your fish were caught.

If there are no health advisories, follow these guidelines:

PREGNANT WOMEN BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

WOMEN WHO MIGHT BECOME PREGNANT

DO NOT EAT shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel.

EACH WEEK, YOU CAN EAT:

up to 1/2 pound* of fish you catch in fresh water (lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams),

OR

up to 1 pound* of fish you catch in the ocean or saltwater bays,

OR

up to 1 pound* of fish and shellfish you buy in stores (fresh, frozen, and canned) or restaurants.

* uncooked weight

CHILDREN LESS THAN 6 YEARS OLD

DO NOT EAT shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel.

EACH WEEK, CHILDREN CAN EAT:

up to 3 ounces* of fish caught in fresh water (lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams) by family or friends.

How do you know how much fish you can eat?

- 3 ounces of fish is about the size of a deck of cards.
- 8 ounces or 1/2 pound of uncooked fish is about the size of a thin paperback book.
- 1 pound of uncooked fish is about 3/4 pound of cooked fish or 2 cans of tuna (6 ounce size).

More tips for making fish safer to eat:

- Eat different kinds of fish.
- Eat salmon, catfish, shrimp, and scallops which have little or no mercury.
- If you eat canned tuna, eat chunk or chunk light tuna which has less mercury than solid white or chunk white tuna.
- Never eat the guts of the fish.
- Eat smaller fish rather than older, larger fish because they generally have less mercury.
- Planning to become pregnant? Begin following these guidelines 1 year before becoming pregnant, if possible.

*To find out about health advisories,
call the agencies listed on the back of this brochure.*