

SEAFOOD RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DIETARY GUIDELINES



Seafood, which includes fish and shellfish, received particular attention in the [2010 DIETARY GUIDELINES](#) because of **evidence of health benefits for the general populations as well as for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding**. Research has shown that eating patterns that include seafood are associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular Disease (CVD).

SEAFOOD RECOMMENDATION

For the general population, consumption of about **8 ounces per week of a variety of seafood**, which provide an average consumption of 250 mg per day of EPA and DHA, is associated with **reduced cardiac deaths** among individuals with and without preexisting CVD. Similarly, consumption by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding of at least 8 ounces per week from seafood choices that are sources of DHA is associated with **improved infant health outcomes**.



The recommendation to consume 8 or more ounces per week (less for young children) of seafood is for the **total package of nutrients** that seafood provides, including its EPA and DHA content. Some seafood choices with higher amounts of EPA and DHA should be included.

NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mercury is a heavy metal found in the form of methyl mercury in seafood in varying levels. Seafood choices higher in EPA and DHA but lower in methyl mercury are encouraged. Seafood varieties commonly consumed in the United States that are higher in EPA and DHA and lower in methyl mercury include **salmon, anchovies, herring, shad, sardines, Pacific oysters, trout, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel** (*not king mackerel, which is high in methyl mercury*). Individuals who regularly consume more than the recommended amounts of seafood that are in the Healthy U.S-Style Pattern should choose a mix of seafood that emphasizes choices relatively low in methyl mercury.

Some canned seafood, such as anchovies, may be high in sodium. To keep sodium intake below recommended limits, individuals can use the Nutrition Facts label to compare sodium amounts.

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should consume at least 8 and up to 12 ounces of a variety of seafood per week, from choices that are lower in methyl mercury. **When in doubt, consult with your health care provider** on how to make healthy food choices that include seafood.

Strategies to increase the variety of protein foods include incorporating seafood as the protein foods choice in meals twice per week in place of meat, poultry, or eggs. For example, choosing a salmon steak, tuna, or sautéed shrimp as part of a dish could help to increase protein variety and meet the seafood recommendation.



SOURCES:

health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-1/a-closer-look-inside-healthy-eating-patterns/#footnote-17

State and local advisories provide information to guide consumers who eat fish caught from local waters. See the EPA website, "Fish Consumption Advisories, General Information." Available at water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/fishshellfish/fishadvisories/general.cfm.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provide joint guidance regarding seafood consumption for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and young children. For more information, see the FDA and EPA websites www.FDA.gov/fishadvice; www.EPA.gov/fishadvice.