

# Fish in Pregnancy

A DIVE INTO WOMEN'S HEALTH & INFANT OUTCOMES



Eating seafood – whether canned, cooked from frozen or fresh during pregnancy – is a good way to get the nutrients you and your baby need. **Seafood is the only food rich in a healthy oil called omega-3 DHA, which is needed for your baby's brain and eye development.** In fact, children whose mothers eat seafood during pregnancy may gain an average 7.7 IQ points compared to those whose mothers do not eat seafood.<sup>1</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children and pregnant and breastfeeding women eat 1-2 servings of fish per week, with sustainably caught or raised fish and shellfish offering the best choices.<sup>2</sup>

This guide will show you tasty ways to meet your seafood needs so you and your baby can maximize the many benefits of fish.

**According to the FDA<sup>3</sup>, fish are part of a healthy eating pattern and provide:**

- Protein
- Healthy omega-3 fats (called DHA and EPA)
- More vitamin B12 and vitamin D than any other type of food
- Iron which is important for infants, young children, and women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant
- Other minerals like selenium, zinc, and iodine

Premature birth is the leading cause of death for children under 5 years old worldwide, accounting for close to one million deaths annually. Premature babies are at higher risk of a range of long-term conditions including visual impairment, developmental delay and learning difficulties. A 2018 review shows omega-3 fatty acids found in seafood dramatically reduce the risk of dangerous preterm birth.<sup>4</sup>

**When pregnant, increasing the daily intake of omega-3s EPA and DHA:**

- lowers the risk of having a premature baby (less than 37 weeks) by 11%
- lowers the risk of having an early premature baby (less than 34 weeks) by 42%
- reduces the risk of having a small baby (less than 2500g) by 10%

## HITTING MILESTONES WITH SEAFOOD

Research shows that moms-to-be who eat fish 2-3 times each week during pregnancy have babies who reach these month milestones more quickly<sup>5</sup>:

**At 6 months:**

Copy sounds  
Hold up head  
Recognize family

**At 18 months:**

Climb stairs  
Drink from a cup  
Draw

## CAN YOU EAT SUSHI WHILE PREGNANT? AND OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS

Sushi can be safe to eat during pregnancy—but stick with sushi that includes cooked seafood. Pregnant women should avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, bigeye tuna, marlin and orange roughy.<sup>3</sup> To reduce your risk of getting sick from food during pregnancy, do not eat any raw meats or raw seafood.



For more ways to increase your seafood intake, visit our website or follow us on social media.

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[seafoodnutrition.org](http://seafoodnutrition.org)

# TROPICAL GRILLED BARRAMUNDI WITH CRUNCHY SLAW

Recipe by Chef Kelly Armetta for Australis Aquaculture

Servings: 3  
Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cook Time: 10 minutes  
Total Time: 20 minutes

## INGREDIENTS:

12 oz. Australis Barramundi, thawed  
1 firm mango, peeled and sliced into ¼ inch pieces  
½ package broccoli slaw  
1 Tbsp. smoked paprika  
2 limes, juiced  
2 Tbsp. canola oil, separated  
2 stalks green onions, chopped and washed  
Salt and pepper

Australis is on a mission to raise the best fish imaginable in the most responsible way possible. That's why Australis Barramundi is:

- High in omega-3s
- Excellent source of lean protein
- No traceable levels of mercury
- Chemical and antibiotic-free
- Versatile and easy to cook



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat up your grill to medium heat or when the temperature reaches 400 degrees. Clean the grill grates and coat with oil to prevent sticking.
2. Brush the barramundi with 1 Tbsp of oil and season it with salt and pepper.
3. Sprinkle paprika on the mango slices until it's well coated.
4. Place both the fish and mango slices on the grill. (Note: If the fish sticks to the grill, you can place it on top of a sheet of aluminum foil.)
5. Allow mangos to lightly char, turn over and cook for 3 minutes, then remove.
6. Cook barramundi for 4 minutes on each side or until it flakes.
7. Meanwhile, toss the broccoli slaw with green onion, lime juice, remaining oil. Add salt and pepper to taste.
8. Place the cooked barramundi onto plate, mango slices on the fish and finish with broccoli slaw on the side.

Eating fish can reduce stress and distress for new parents. Studies of pregnant women reported that eating 8-12 oz., or 2-3 servings, of fish a week reduced psychological distress and post-partum depression. Interestingly, fathers felt less distress during the pregnancy when they regularly ate fish, too.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hibbeln JR, et al. Relationships between seafood consumption during pregnancy and childhood and neurocognitive development: Two systematic reviews. PLEFA, V151, 14 - 36.

<sup>2</sup> Bernstein AS, Oken E, de Ferranti S; Council on Environmental Health; Committee on Nutrition. Fish, Shellfish, and Children's Health: An Assessment of Benefits, Risks, and Sustainability. Pediatrics. 2019;143(6):e20190999 - 1 Oct 2019.

<sup>3</sup> FDA and EPA. Advice about Eating Fish. <https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/advice-about-eating-fish>. Updated: 07/02/2019.

<sup>4</sup> Middleton P, et al. Omega-3 fatty acid addition during pregnancy. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD003402.

<sup>5</sup> Oken E, et al. Maternal fish Intake during Pregnancy, Blood Mercury Levels, and Child Cognition at Age 3 Years in a US Cohort. American Journal of Epidemiology, 2008; 167(10), 1171-1181.

<sup>6</sup> Hamazaki K, et al. Dietary intake of fish and n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and risks of perinatal depression: The Japan Environment and Children's Study (JECS). J Psychiatr Res, 2018;98:9-16.