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.1

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.2

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 FDA3, 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.4

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 quickly5:

**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.3 To reduce your risk of getting sick from food during pregnancy, do not eat any raw meats or raw seafood.
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.6

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1 Hibbeln JR, et al. Relationships between seafood consumption during pregnancy and childhood and neurocognitive development: Two systematic reviews. PLEFA, V.151, 14 - 36.