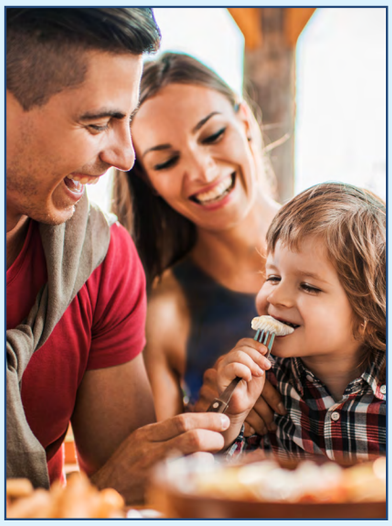
# ADVICE ABOUT EATING FISH

## For Women Who Are or Might Become Pregnant, Breastfeeding Mothers, and Young Children

### Eating fish‡ when pregnant or breastfeeding can provide health benefits.

Fish and other protein-rich foods have nutrients that can help your child's growth and development. As part of a healthy eating pattern, eating fish may also offer heart health benefits and lower the risk of obesity.



### Nutritional Value of Fish

The *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends:

- At least 8 ounces of seafood (less for young children) per week based on a 2,000 calorie diet
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to consume between 8 and 12 ounces of a variety of seafood per week, from choices that are lower in mercury.

Fish are part of a healthy eating pattern and provide:

- Protein
- Healthy omega-3 fats (called DHA and EPA)
- More vitamin $B_{12}$ 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.

### Choose a variety of fish that are lower in mercury.

While it is important to limit mercury in the diets of women who are pregnant and breastfeeding and young children, many types of fish are both nutritious and lower in mercury.

**This chart can help you choose which fish to eat, and how often to eat them, based on their mercury levels.**

**What is a serving?** As a guide, use the palm of your hand.

**For an adult**
**1 serving = 4 ounces**

Eat 2 to 3 servings a week from the "Best Choices" list (**OR** 1 serving from the "Good Choices" list).

**For children, a serving is 1 ounce at age 2 and increases with age to 4 ounces by age 11.**

**If you eat fish caught by family or friends, check for fish advisories. If there is no advisory, eat only one serving and no other fish that week.***

## Best Choices
EAT 2 TO 3 SERVINGS A WEEK

- Anchovy
- Atlantic croaker
- Atlantic mackerel
- Black sea bass
- Butterfish
- Catfish
- Clam
- Cod
- Crab
- Crawfish
- Flounder
- Haddock
- Hake
- Herring
- Lobster, American and spiny
- Mullet
- Oyster
- Pacific chub mackerel
- Perch, freshwater and ocean
- Pickerel
- Plaice
- Pollock
- Salmon
- Sardine
- Scallop
- Shad
- Shrimp
- Skate
- Smelt
- Sole
- Squid
- Tilapia
- Trout, freshwater
- Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)
- Whitefish
- Whiting

OR

## Good Choices
EAT 1 SERVING A WEEK

- Bluefish
- Buffalofish
- Carp
- Chilean sea bass/ Patagonian toothfish
- Grouper
- Halibut
- Mahi mahi/ dolphinfish
- Monkfish
- Rockfish
- Sablefish
- Sheepshead
- Snapper
- Spanish mackerel
- Striped bass (ocean)
- Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
- Tuna, albacore/ white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
- Tuna, yellowfin
- Weakfish/ seatrout
- White croaker/ Pacific croaker

## Choices to Avoid
HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS

- King mackerel
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
- Tuna, bigeye

* Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants. State advisories will tell you how often you can safely eat those fish.

www.FDA.gov/fishadvice
www.EPA.gov/fishadvice

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

This advice supports the recommendations of the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, developed for people 2 years and older, which reflects current science on nutrition to improve public health. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* focuses on dietary patterns and the effects of food and nutrient characteristics on health. For advice about feeding children under 2 years of age, you can consult the American Academy of Pediatrics.

‡ THIS ADVICE REFERS TO FISH AND SHELLFISH COLLECTIVELY AS "FISH" / ADVICE REVISED JULY 2019