



**Fish is good,**

**Mercury is bad**

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### **Why eat seafood?**

Fish and shellfish contain omega-3 fatty acids that can improve the health of people of all ages. The types of fat found in fish are the healthiest fats for the heart, brain, and immune system. It is also important for pregnant women and children to eat fish, because the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish promote healthy brain and eye development. Fish and shellfish are also an excellent source of protein and many other nutrients.

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### **Should I worry about eating fish?**

Eating fish is a good choice, but some fish have higher levels of toxic chemicals in their bodies than others. Mercury and some other water pollutants can build up in the bodies of living things over time. These pollutants are at much higher levels in animals that eat other animals that contain mercury, including many of the types of fish we eat. Mercury can be released from burning coal or other industrial activities and can travel long distances through the air or water. If it ends up in water, it is changed into a form that stays in muscle and other tissues of animals and cannot be removed during preparation or cooking. Other pollutants, like PCBs, build up in animal fats. When we eat fish with mercury or PCBs, these pollutants can harm brain development at relatively low levels and can be toxic to adults at high levels.

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### **How much seafood should I eat?**

Try to eat plenty of different kinds of seafood that are high in omega-3 fatty acids and low in pollutants. Women of childbearing age should eat two to three servings and children older than age two should try to eat one to two servings of fish from the "best choices" list each week. A serving of fish is about the size of the palm of your hand.

Women of childbearing age and children should avoid eating shark, swordfish, bluefish, or striped bass caught in Rhode Island or elsewhere; men and women past child-bearing age should limit how much they eat.

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### **What about seafood I catch myself?**

Most seafood caught from Narragansett Bay or the Atlantic Ocean is safe to eat, including flounder and scup. Clams, crabs, and other shellfish are safe, as long as they are collected from an approved area and cooked thoroughly. Shellfish closures are listed on the Department of Environmental Management's website.

[www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/shellfish/](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/shellfish/)

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### **What about freshwater fish?**

The only freshwater fish you should eat from Rhode Island lakes and streams are stocked trout as they do not have high levels of pollutants in their bodies. Do not eat other freshwater fish caught in Rhode Island, due to widespread historic pollution of our lakes and streams.

## One size does not fit all

### What is a serving?

To find out, use the palm of your hand!



For an adult  
four ounces



For children,  
ages four to seven  
two ounces



[seafoodri.com](http://seafoodri.com)



[health.ri.gov/healthrisks/poisoning/mercury/about/fish/](http://health.ri.gov/healthrisks/poisoning/mercury/about/fish/)

## Best Choices

about two to three servings a week

Anchovy	Pollock
Atlantic croaker	Salmon
Butterfish	Sardine
Catfish (farm-raised)	Scallop
Clams	Scup
Cod	Shrimp
Crab	Skate
Flatfish (flounder, plaice, sole)	Smelt
Haddock	Squid
Hake	Tilapia
Herring	Trout (farm-raised)
Lobster	Tuna (canned light, including skipjack)
Mackerel (Atlantic, jack, chub)	Whitefish
Mullet	Whiting
Oyster	

## Good Choices

up to one serving a week

Black sea bass	Sheepshead
Buffalo fish	Snapper
Carp	Spanish mackerel
Grouper	Tautog
Halibut	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Mahi-Mahi	Tuna (canned albacore, yellowfin, or white)
Monkfish	Weakfish
Rockfish	White croaker (Pacific)
Sablefish	

## Seafood to Avoid

Highest mercury or PCB levels  
(up to one serving per month)

Bluefish	Sea lamprey
Chilean sea bass	Shark
Eel	Striped bass
King mackerel	Swordfish
Marlin	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
Orange roughy	Tuna (fresh and frozen)