

Pregnant women warned on tuna

June 7 2006

The Consumers Union has recommended that pregnant women abstain completely from eating canned tuna.

The group based the recommendation on a series in the Chicago Tribune about high mercury levels in canned tuna, as well as on testing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the newspaper said.

Pregnant women should also avoid Chilean sea bass, halibut, American lobster and Spanish mackerel, Consumers Union said.

The FDA still says that pregnant women can safely eat light tuna in spite of testing that found that 15 percent comes from species with high levels of mercury. A spokesman said that the average amount of mercury is still within acceptable limits, given the health benefits of eating tuna.

But Jean Halloran, director of food policy for Consumers Union, said that pregnant women should play it safe, given the possible effect of mercury on a fetus's developing brain.

"We think that high exposures, even for a day or two, could be too much of a risk," she said.

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