

Study: Seafood a safer catch than expected

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Food experts have discovered U.S. consumers are confused about seafood safety with many having differing and often conflicting beliefs.

In a survey conducted by the University of Maryland's Center for Food Nutrition and Agriculture Policy, consumers listed tuna, salmon and shrimp as the seafood containing the highest mercury levels.

But when were asked which fish had the lowest levels of mercury their responses were identical: tuna, salmon and shrimp.

"On one hand, we want pregnant women to eat fish, as there are plenty of benefits to the fetus in terms of cognitive development and other factors," said university researcher Maureen Storey, "But on the other hand, there is confusion about the risks, so there are a lot of conflicting messages that have been misunderstood."

For the record, Storey -- who presented the survey Tuesday in Chicago during the annual meeting of the Institute of Food Technologists -- said the fish containing the highest levels of mercury are large predatory, such as shark and swordfish.

"There may be some risk in consumption of fish," said Storey, "but there's a bigger risk in not consuming fish at all."

The IFT annual meeting and exposition ended Wednesday.

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