

Pregnant or breast-feeding women urged to eat more fish

June 10 2014



Pregnant or breast-feeding women should increase their weekly consumption of fish, choosing types lower in mercury, according to new advice issued Tuesday by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

(HealthDay)—Pregnant or breast-feeding women should increase their weekly consumption of fish, choosing types lower in mercury, according to new advice issued Tuesday by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The two agencies now recommend that women eat at least 8 ounces and up to 12 ounces per week of low-mercury fish, to support fetal growth and development. That equates to two or three servings. Young children and women who might become pregnant should also try to eat a similar amount of fish every week. Previously, the FDA and the EPA recommended maximum amounts of fish that these groups of people

should consume, but did not promote a minimum amount.

The FDA and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention caution pregnant or breast-feeding women to avoid four types of fish associated with high mercury levels. They are shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish caught in the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, consumption of albacore tuna should be limited to 6 ounces a week. Recommended lower-mercury fish include shrimp, pollock, salmon, canned light tuna, tilapia, catfish, and cod.

When eating fish caught from local streams, rivers, and lakes, follow fish advisories from local authorities. If such advice isn't available, total intake should be limited to 6 ounces a week for adults and 1 to 3 ounces for children, the federal officials said.

"For years many women have limited or avoided eating fish during pregnancy or feeding fish to their young children," Stephen Ostroff, M.D., the FDA's acting chief scientist, said during a news conference.

"But emerging science now tells us that limiting or avoiding fish during pregnancy and early childhood can mean missing out on important nutrients that can have a positive impact on growth and development as well as on general health." During the news conference, Elizabeth Southerland, Ph.D., director of the EPA's Office of Water added:

"There is now substantial evidence that fish consumption can benefit growth and development in the fetus and young children even though fish contain methyl mercury, and that this beneficial effect is much more likely to occur than harm from methyl mercury."

More information: [Full Article](#)
[More Information](#)

Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Pregnant or breast-feeding women urged to eat more fish (2014, June 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-06-fda-pregnant-women-low-mercury-seafood.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.