



## something fishy about mercury

*As health concerns about the mercury content of fish increase, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has released updated advice on fish consumption.*

Exposure to high levels of mercury is harmful to the nervous system, particularly in unborn babies, as their brains are developing. Tests indicate mild learning disabilities where exposure to mercury occurred in the womb through maternal consumption of fish.

### safe eating advice

Not all fish consumption is banned. Two to three serves per week of lower-mercury fish are still deemed safe. Canned tuna, for example, contains lower mercury levels, since the fish are generally caught when less than a year old. If you enjoy eating fish, the best advice is to choose from a variety of smaller species. However, large, long-living fish species should be strictly limited:

#### **Pregnant women, those trying to fall pregnant and young children:**

No more than one serve (150 g for adults or 75 g for children) per fortnight of shark ("flake" in fish-and-chip shops), swordfish,

broadbill and marlin; or, no more than one serve per week of catfish or orange roughy ("sea perch").

**For the general population:** No more than one serve per week of shark, swordfish, broadbill and marlin. (This assumes no other fish meals are consumed in the same time period.)

### why eat fish?

Fish is an excellent source of protein, low in saturated fat, and a source of iodine, vitamin D and omega-3. Health authorities promote up to two fish meals per week, mainly because the omega-3 reduces risk factors for heart disease, stroke and some immune-related conditions.

People who want the benefits of omega-3 but avoid fish should eat linseed, walnuts, soya beans, omega-3-enriched eggs or canola oil/margarine on a regular basis.

Turn to **page 27** for an omega-3-rich recipe—one that's not fishy!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

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