

THE TRUTH ABOUT MERCURY

EDUCATION

FOOD SAFETY — MERCURY

A quick guide to the dangers of mercury, and knowing which fish are safest to eat.

Is there a little alarm bell that goes off in the back of your mind every time you eat fish? Is that bell triggered by things you've heard about mercury and maybe even someone you know who knows someone whose uncle got mercury poisoning? While a lot of the fear around mercury in fish is largely unfounded, you're not alone. Countless people around the world limit their intake of fish based on concerns about mercury and end up missing out on the incredible health benefits to be had from making certain types of fish a regular part of their diet.

Let's put those concerns to rest by taking a quick look at the truth about mercury in fish, as well as which fish are safest to consume.

First off, let's get to know mercury.

Mercury is a metal that occurs naturally in our soil and water and ends up in trace amounts in our fish. Many of us were first introduced to mercury in our thermometers and likely remember our parents' stern warnings to be careful not to shatter the glass and release the harmful mercury inside. Maybe you've even heard the saying "Mad as a hatter" and its origin of certain hatters exhibiting the strange signs of **mercury poisoning** after being exposed to it routinely as part of their trade.

Regardless of what you've heard, you probably know it's not something you want to willingly put in your body, and about that you'd be right. What's important to note is that **mercury only becomes harmful to us when large quantities build up in our body.** This happens in rare instances when people over consume certain types of mercury-heavy fish. According to the FDA, side effects can be extreme, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Vision changes
- Irritability
- Memory problems
- Lack of coordination
- Numbness
- Shyness
- Muscle weakness
- Tremors
- Nerve loss
- Trouble walking



Mercury levels in the northern Pacific Ocean have risen about **30 percent** over the past 20 years and are expected to rise by **50 percent more by 2050** as industrial mercury emissions increase, according to a 2009 study led by researchers at the U.S. Geological Survey and Harvard University.

So how do we avoid consuming too much mercury through the fish we eat?

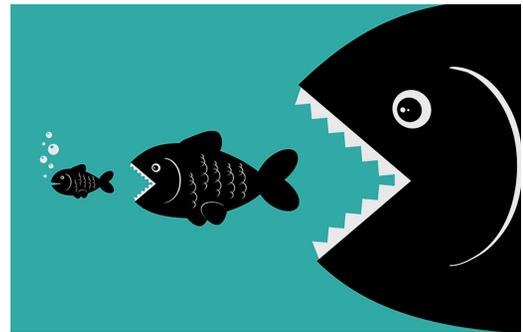
For one thing, **variety**. In addition to making for a more interesting dining experience, by varying the types of fish and other seafood in your diet you're automatically decreasing the likelihood that you're over indulging in any one particularly mercury-heavy type of fish.

Another good rule of thumb is that **the bigger the fish, the more mercury it contains**. That's because these larger fish prey on smaller fish. When they eat them, they also take on all of the mercury they had ingested. This leads to increased amounts of mercury in the larger fish as it builds up in their bodies over time.

Which fish should we be most concerned about?

According to the FDA, here are the fish to avoid:

- Swordfish
- Orange Roughy
- Marlin
- King Mackerel
- Bigeye Tuna
- Shark



The FDA goes further to recommend Salmon, Trout, canned light Tuna, Tilapia, Shrimp and Ocean Striped Bass as a best bet for low mercury levels. Of course, this doesn't mean all of these fish are all above reproach in all ways, especially given environmental impact and production method concerns — we're strictly looking at mercury content at the moment.

It's a wild world out in the ocean, but with this knowledge, you should be able to navigate your fish selections wisely when it comes to choosing fish with low mercury levels. A great way to know which fish are safe and which are not is to download a region-specific seafood buying guide from the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program. **Note:** Evaqua Farms red Steelhead and Rainbow Trout are raised on land in carefully controlled environments, using high quality eggs and premium feed. Our combined efforts ensure that **our fish have extremely low (almost immeasurable) mercury levels** compared to wild salmon and trout.

Your health is important and it's good to be vigilant, but it's better to be both informed and vigilant. Don't forget, the Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish offer us such incredible health benefits, and we hope you take advantage and make fish a regular part of your diet.



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLY RAISED, USA RED STEELHEAD OR RAINBOW TROUT?

We would love to speak with you! We sell to distributors, restaurants, institutions and other commercial retailers. If you'd like to request our price list, place an order or request a sample, we'll be happy to help.