



Q | I Keep Hearing About Toxins in Fish. Is it Safe to Eat?

A | Yes, experts say that most seafood is healthy to eat twice a week. But it's important to avoid the less-healthy types that may be contaminated with pollutants.



Seafood has a long list of health benefits, including high-quality protein, low levels of saturated fat, and heart-healthy omega-3s. Some types, though, also contain PCBs or mercury, which could harm developing babies. Happily, it's actually pretty easy to make a healthy choice and avoid the risks. Here's how. **THINK SMALL** "The best way to reduce exposure to contaminants is to eat fewer big fish," says Tim Fitzgerald, MS, a scientist and senior policy specialist with the Environmental Defense Fund. Pollutants from the atmosphere regularly settle into the ocean, and fish that grow very big—predators like shark, marlin, and Chilean sea bass—accumulate more contaminants in their bodies during their long lives.

MIX IT UP Put seafood on the menu at least twice a week and mix up the varieties you eat to lower the risks of contaminants. If you like tuna, for instance, eat it only once a week because it's a bigger fish; choose something smaller—say, shrimp—for your next meal. Whatever you do, don't stop eating all seafood out of fear. "Eating fish is the single best dietary change you can make to reduce your heart disease risk," says Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, co-director of the Harvard School of Public Health's Program in Cardiac Epidemiology. Studies suggest that the abundant omega-3 fats in seafood help your heart by lowering blood-fat levels, slowing the buildup of plaque in your arteries, and slightly lowering blood pressure. —SHAUN CHAVIS

The Safest Catches

These varieties of seafood are low in contaminants, great sources of omega-3s, and easy on the planet (they're not caught by trawls and dredges, which damage the ocean floor), according to the new "Super Green" list from Harvard School of Public Health, Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch, and the Environmental Defense Fund. For seafood meal ideas, go to recipes.health.com.



Mussels
(farmed)



Salmon
(wild, from Alaska)



Oysters
(farmed)



Pink shrimp
(wild, from the Pacific Northwest)



Rainbow trout
(farmed)



Albacore tuna
(pole-caught, from the United States or Canada)



Pacific sardines
(wild)



Seafood Love

1.4 grams

That's the amount of omega-3s in a 3.5-ounce serving of salmon—enough, studies say, to boost your heart health if you eat it twice a week.

64%

That's the percentage of Health.com-poll respondents who eat seafood one or more times a week.

4.1 pounds

That's how much shrimp (45 jumbos or 148 small ones) the average American eats every year, making it the most popular seafood. Canned tuna is a distant second at 2.8 pounds.