Why Is Seafood Consumption a Concern?

Balancing Risks & Benefits

1. Which species to eat?
   - Low mercury level (page 4, 5);
   - Mercury levels in shellfish are often lower than those in many finfish;
   - Avoid eating predatory fish like shark.

2. How much to eat?
   EPA recommends that women of child bearing age and young children may eat up to 12 ounces (2 meals) weekly of a variety of seafood items that are low in mercury.

Mercury in SEAFOOD

Virginia & Lower Chesapeake Bay SEAFOOD GUIDE

Learn More

A. Mercury concentrations can increase slightly upon cooking of seafood.
B. If you avoid eating fish, you are not taking advantage of the nutritional benefits of fish.
C. Omega-3 fatty acids are important nutrients in fish. Cardiac societies recommend the intake of 1 gram of omega-3 fatty acids daily to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

These recommendations are provided through a grant to Virginia Institute of Marine Science from Virginia Sea Grant.

June 2013

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The human health screening value is 0.3mg/kg for mercury in fish.

**KEY**
*Items caught from Virginia waters.
Items with no * were purchased primarily through Virginia stores and markets.

**INFORMATION SOURCES**
VA Department of Environmental Quality. Fish Tissue Analysis of Metals, 2008.
Seafood Watch. Monterey Bay Aquarium; EPA. EPA-823-F-04-009.
FDA. Mercury concentrations in fish: FDA monitoring program (1990-2010).

### BEST CHOICES
**Mercury level Below 0.3mg/kg**
- Blue crab
- *Catfish
- Cod
- *Eel
- Mussels
- *Perch
- Sardine
- *Sea trout
- *Spot
- Tilapia
- Tuna (canned, light)
- Whiting

### GOOD ALTERNATIVES
**Mercury level About 0.3mg/kg**
- Crab cake
- Lobster
- Salmon (fresh)
- Snapper
- *Striped bass
- Tuna (fresh)

### AVOID
**Mercury level Above 0.3mg/kg**
- King Mackerel
- Sharks
- Tilefish
- Tuna (canned, white)