

Habits for a Healthy Life

Healthy Habit #7:

Benefits of Eating Fish

By **Pepper Carbaugh,**

So now that we've learned about the importance of getting adequate sleep and limiting sugary drinks, let's spend the next 21 days enriching our diet with the many benefits of fish.

It's possible that you may have reservations about eating fish because you've heard that it could contain mercury. This is possible, depending on the type of fish, its age, what the fish eats, and where it lives.

Those who are most at risk of eating fish containing mercury are pregnant women, those trying to become pregnant, nursing mothers or young children.

If you fall into one of these categories, you should avoid shark, swordfish, tilefish, marlin, king mackerel and tuna steak, as they are noted to have the highest amount of mercury. All other types of fish are safe to eat once per week.

If you do not fall into one of these categories, you need to know that the benefits of eating fish 2-3 times per week *far outweigh* the risks associ-

ated with mercury.

Unlike red meat, fish has lower saturated fat and is still a good source of protein. Most importantly, fish contains two main omega-3 fatty acids. These fatty acids known as EPA and DHA, when consumed regularly, have been shown to improve cardiac health by lowering triglyceride levels and slowing down the build-up of plaque within the arteries. It's this same plaque that may contribute to high blood pressure and other more serious health conditions such as strokes and heart attacks.

When eating fish, it's best to bake or broil it in healthy cooking sprays such as canola or olive oil. A simple guideline to remember is that a typical serving size will fit in the palm of your hand. Also, to supplement the benefits of fish, try adding fresh vegetables to your meal. This will contribute to your low fat diet and lead the path to a heart healthy lifestyle.



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