

Everyday, we eat, drink, breathe, and touch chemicals that exist around us. The chemicals can affect our health. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES will give you the information you need to make choices for better health and a greener environment — for yourself, your family, and your community.

What do I need to know about fish?

- Fish is high in protein, and eating fish regularly is good for your health.
- Fish can have a lot of harmful chemicals in them.



When is eating fish bad for your health?

- Eating fish with a lot of harmful chemicals in them can be bad for your health.
- The chemicals can harm everyone. They are more likely to harm
 - young children
 - pregnant women
 - people who are sick.
- Here are some of the dangerous chemicals that are often found in certain fish:
 - **Mercury** and **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)** — they can harm
 - the health of a pregnant woman
 - the health of a developing fetus
 - the brains of babies and young children, slowing down mental development
 - **PCBs** — can raise your risk of cancer.
 - **Pesticides** — may raise your risk of
 - cancers of the blood, brain, and lymph system
 - Parkinson's disease

How can I tell if a fish has lot of harmful chemicals in it?

- You will not be able to tell by looking at it or tasting it.
- Fish markets, grocery stores, and restaurants will still sell it.
- You can view a list of the mercury levels in fish on the Natural Resource Defense Council's website here: www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/guide.asp



Be safe:

- **Don't eat** — king mackerel, shark, swordfish, or tilefish
- **Eat smaller fish** — anchovies, herring, sardines, smelts
- **Eat smaller portions** — especially fish that may have a lot of chemicals, such as bluefish, dark tuna, and orange roughy (A three-ounce serving is about the size of a deck of cards.)
- **Broil, bake, or grill your fish** — Let the fat, some PCBs, and pesticides drip away. (Deep-frying and pan-frying are not the best ways to cook fish.)
- **Trim the fat** from fish to remove some PCBs and pesticides.
- Find out how much fish is safe for you using a "**Smart Fish Calculator**": www.iatp.org/foodandhealth/fishcalculator/

Be careful with tuna:

- Enjoy canned tuna sometimes, but not every day.
- Tuna steaks have more mercury than canned tuna, so don't eat them as often.

- For a guide on how much tuna is good for you based on your weight, see “**Eating Tuna Safely**” www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/tuna.asp

What do I need to know if I catch the fish myself?

- Many people like to go fishing and share their catch. But even fish you catch yourself may not be safe to eat.
- Always check the local fish advisory. It will tell you what kinds of fish are safe to catch and eat wherever you go fishing. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency posts local fish advisories. You can check them out at: www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish



Where can I get more information?

The Environmental Defense Fund seafood website: www.edf.org/seafood

Pocket guide to the best seafood choices in your area:

www.mbayaq.org/cr/cr_seafoodwatch/download.asp

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s “What You Need to Know about Mercury in Fish and Shellfish”: www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advice/#what
- The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy’s “Smart Fish”: www.iatp.org/foodandhealth/

