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# **GUIDE**

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## **Nutritional guidelines for eating fish during pregnancy**



The Ottawa | L'Hôpital  
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***Disclaimer***

*This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.*

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## **Fish contributes to a healthy pregnancy.**

Health Canada recommends that **pregnant women** continue to eat at least 150 grams of cooked fish each week as suggested in *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

Experts agree on the benefits:

- A longer gestation
- Improved fetal growth
- Improved visual acuity (eyes)
- Improved cognition (brain)
- Possibly reducing or preventing post partum depression (on-going research)



Fish is an excellent source of:

- High quality protein
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** compared to other choices in the meat group.

Fish also contains other important nutrients:

- iron
- zinc
- iodine
- magnesium
- potassium
- copper
- selenium
- B vitamins
- Vitamin D

To limit the risks of exposure to contaminants:

- Cook all game fish
- Discard all the fat, intestines and skin
- Do NOT use cooking juices
- Follow advice for quantity and frequency
- Obtain local advisories if necessary

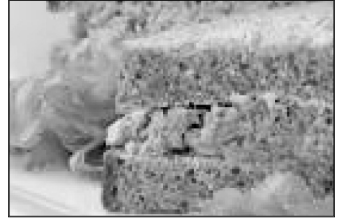
# ***Advice for safe fish consumption***

## 1. Tuna

- Light -not restricted
- White- up to 300 grams a week
- Fresh or frozen – up to 150 grams a month

## 2. Eat at least 150 grams per week of:

- anchovy
- capelin
- char
- flounder
- haddock
- hake
- herring
- mackerel (Atlantic)
- mullet
- Pollock (Atlantic) (Boston Bluefish)
- salmon
- sardines
- sole
- smelt
- tuna light or white
- trout (rainbow)
- white fish (lake)



## 3. Eat no more than 150 grams per month of:

- bass
- catfish
- eel
- escolar
- herring (lake)
- mackerel (king)
- marlin

- orange roughy
- pan fish
- perch (yellow)
- pike
- shark
- snapper (white or golden)
- sturgeon
- sucker
- swordfish
- trout (grey- lake)
- tuna fresh or frozen
- walleye

## ***Advice if you don't eat fish***

- Fish oil supplements are not equivalent to eating fish
- A food-based approach is better
- Foods like eggs and poultry can contain similar nutrients
- A few vegetables (avocado), oils (canola, flax), nuts (walnuts) and seeds (pumpkin, flax) can also add good fats to your diet
- Women who wish to take a fish oil supplement need to look for a Natural Product Number (NPN) on the product label. This shows that the fish oil supplement is government-approved for safety, efficacy, and quality.
- Avoid taking cod liver oil, particularly if already taking a multivitamin supplement (you would take too much vitamin A)

*For more information on the role of essential fatty acids (omega-3) in pregnancy, ask for the booklet!*



