



U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

EATING FISH: A GUIDE FOR CHINESE AMERICAN FAMILIES



Read Mei-ling's story to find out how important fish are as part of a healthy diet and for your child's growth and development and how you can eat fish while pregnant.

Mei-ling and Ming are enjoying an afternoon at home. Mei-ling has some great news!



Later that week, Mei-ling and Ming visit the doctor.

I love eating fish, but can I still eat it while I'm pregnant?

Absolutely! Fish are a source of key nutrients that support a child's brain development like omega-3 and omega-6 fats, iron, iodine, and choline. Fish are a source of other nutrients like protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and selenium too.

Deciding which fish to eat doesn't have to be difficult or confusing. FDA and EPA have developed this chart that makes it so easy to choose what fish to eat. This advice supports recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and it is simple to use. You can even take it with you when grocery shopping.

It's easy! Just eat 2 to 3 servings of fish per week from the Best Choices list. There are so many choices! 90% of the fish eaten in the United States are listed in the Best Choices category.

See the full advice on page 5.

How much is a serving?

The advice shows you that, too! A serving for an adult is 4 ounces - about the size of the palm of your hand.

And just be sure to avoid fish that are listed under the Choices to Avoid list, as they may contain high levels of mercury, which can be harmful to an unborn baby and young children. There are just a few of them.

What about dishes containing raw fish, like *yúshēng*?

Raw fish is not recommended for those who are pregnant or young children. You can cook a variety of fish.

So, I can eat whatever cooked fish I want so long as I follow this chart?

Yes, absolutely! While it is important to limit mercury in your diet, many types of fish are both nutritious and lower in mercury. Remember to vary which types of fish you eat. Eating a variety of fish is important.

Mei-ling and Ming have brought their baby, Ethan, home! Mei-fen is helping Mei-ling during her month of recovery.

Here's something to eat.

Qīng chǎo xiārén, my favorite! I want to eat this every week.

The chart your doctor gave you says to eat a variety of fish. Instead of *qīng chǎo xiārén* every week, I can make you many others. I have recipes for whole grilled fish, and your chart shows so many fish to choose from! And how about *qīng zhēng yú*, too?

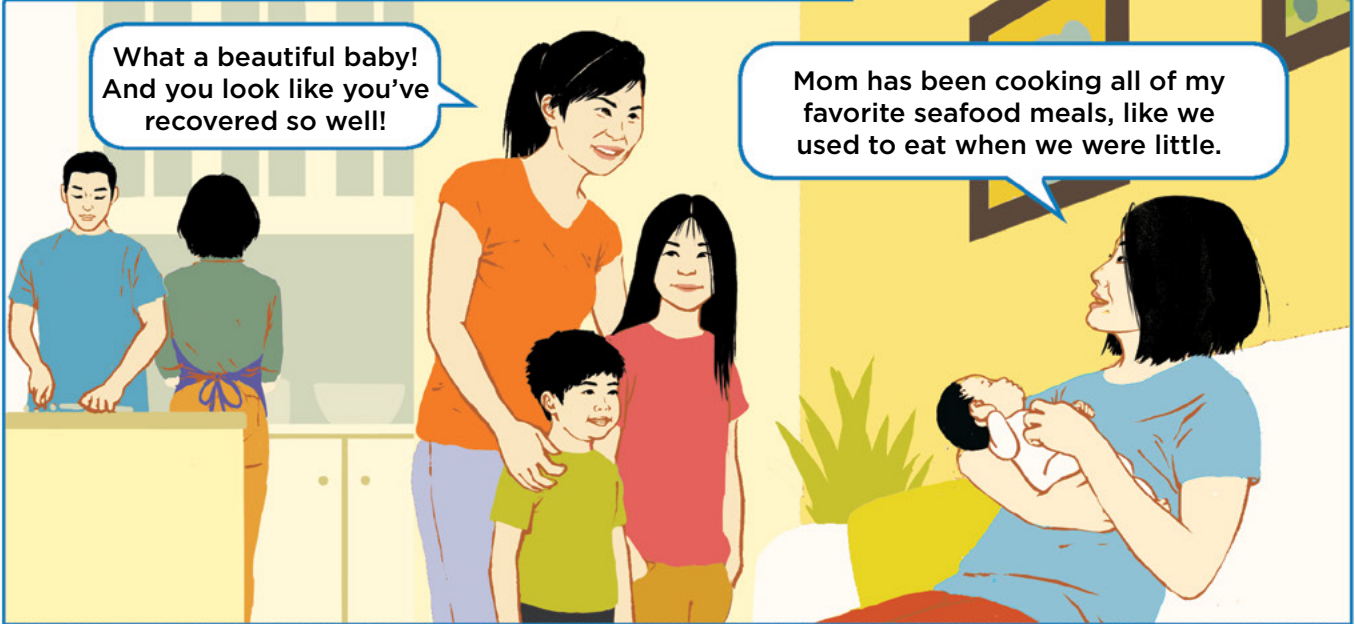
What kind?

Hēi lú yú.

Okay, good. There are so many healthy ways of preparing fish like grilling and steaming so you can try a variety of fish cooked in a variety of ways!

That sounds great!

It's time for Ethan's full month ceremony already! Mei-ling's cousin, Cindy Lee, and her children are ready to celebrate.



What a beautiful baby! And you look like you've recovered so well!

Mom has been cooking all of my favorite seafood meals, like we used to eat when we were little.



That's great. I should cook the same ones for my kids. Fish has so many nutrients and is very good for children.

Yes, and this chart makes it so simple to choose fish for yourself and your family. For children, serve them fish in the Best Choices list. A serving is 1 ounce at age 1 and increases with age to 4 ounces by age 11. Babies can have fish when they are ready to start eating food, but I'll just need to make sure to remove any bones.



This chart does make things easier! I am also excited to try cooking new dishes with fish from the Best Choices list! Thank you. I will share it with other parents I know.

See the full advice on page 5.



Time to eat!

For more information about FDA and EPA's fish advice for those who may become pregnant and parents, visit www.fda.gov/fishadvice.

ADVICE ABOUT EATING FISH

For Those Who Might Become or Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding and Children Ages 1 – 11 Years

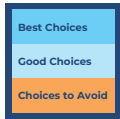


Fish‡ provide key nutrients that support a child’s brain development.

Fish are part of a [healthy eating pattern](#) and provide key nutrients during pregnancy, breastfeeding, and/or early childhood to support a **child’s brain development**:

- Omega-3 (called DHA and EPA) and omega-6 fats
- Iron
- Iodine (during pregnancy)
- Choline

Choline also supports development of the **baby’s spinal cord**. Fish provide iron and zinc to support **children’s immune systems**. Fish are a source of other nutrients like protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and selenium too.



Choose a variety of fish that are lower in mercury.

While it is important to limit mercury in the diets of those who are pregnant or breastfeeding and children, many types of fish are both nutritious and lower in mercury.

This chart can help you choose which fish to eat, and how often to eat them, based on their mercury levels.

What is a serving? As a guide, use the palm of your hand.



Pregnancy and breastfeeding:
1 serving is 4 ounces

Eat 2 to 3 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list (OR 1 serving from the “Good Choices” list).



Childhood:

On average, a serving is about:

- 1 ounce at age 1 to 3
- 2 ounces at age 4 to 7
- 3 ounces at age 8 to 10
- 4 ounces at age 11

Eat 2 servings a week from the “Best Choices” list.

Best Choices			Good Choices		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop	Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Atlantic croaker	Lobster,	Shad	Buffalofish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Atlantic mackerel	American and spiny	Shrimp	Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Black sea bass	Mullet	Skate	Chilean sea bass/ Patagonian toothfish	Sheepshead	Weakfish/seatrout
Butterfish	Oyster	Smelt	Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/ Pacific croaker
Catfish	Pacific chub mackerel	Sole	Halibut	Spanish mackerel	
Clam	Perch, freshwater and ocean	Squid	Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Striped bass (ocean)	
Cod	Pickering	Tilapia			
Crab	Plaice	Trout, freshwater			
Crawfish	Pollock	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)			
Flounder	Salmon	Whitefish			
Haddock	Sardine	Whiting			
Hake					
Choices to Avoid HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS					
			King mackerel	Shark	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
			Marlin	Swordfish	Tuna, bigeye
			Orange roughy		

What about fish caught by family or friends? Check for [fish and shellfish advisories](#) to tell you how often you can safely eat those fish. If there is no advisory, eat only one serving and no other fish that week. Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants.

www.FDA.gov/fishadvice
www.EPA.gov/fishadvice



‡ This advice refers to fish and shellfish collectively as “fish” / Advice revised October 2021



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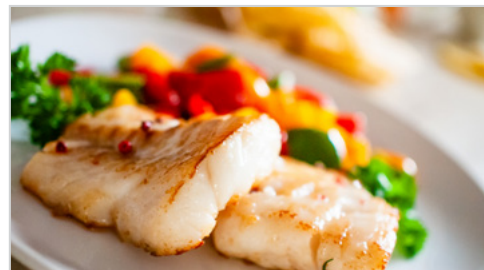
For Those Who Might Become or Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding and Children Ages 1 – 11 Years



The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends eating fish as part of a healthy eating pattern.

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends:

- At least 8 ounces of seafood (less for children§) per week based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
- Those who are pregnant or breastfeeding consume between **8 and 12 ounces per week** of a variety of seafood from choices that are **lower in mercury**.



Eating fish can provide other health benefits too.

Fish intake during pregnancy is recommended because moderate scientific evidence shows it can help your baby's cognitive development.

Strong evidence shows that eating fish, as part of a healthy eating pattern, **may have heart health benefits**. [Healthy eating patterns](#) that include fish may have other benefits too. Moderate scientific evidence shows that eating patterns relatively higher in fish but also in other foods, including vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, lean meats and poultry, nuts, and unsaturated vegetable oils, and lower in red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, and refined grains are associated with:



Promotion of bone health – decreases the risk for hip fractures*



Decreases in the risk of becoming overweight or obese*



Decreases in the risk for colon and rectal cancers*

A healthy eating pattern

consists of choices across all food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods, which includes fish), eaten in recommended amounts, and within calorie needs. Healthy eating patterns include foods that provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

This advice supports the recommendations of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), which reflects current science on nutrition to improve public health. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* focuses on dietary patterns and the effects of food and nutrient characteristics on health.

§ For some children, the amounts of fish in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are higher than in this FDA/EPA advice. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* states that to consume those higher amounts, children should only be fed fish from the “Best Choices” list that are even lower in mercury – these fish are anchovies, Atlantic mackerel, catfish, clams, crab, crawfish, flounder, haddock, mullet, oysters, plaice, pollock, salmon, sardines, scallops, shad, shrimp, sole, squid, tilapia, trout, and whiting.

* There is [moderate scientific evidence of a relationship](#) between the eating pattern as a whole and the potential health benefit.

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