Safe Fish to Eat and the Fish to Avoid

We've always been told fish is a nutritious choice, a good source of lean protein and healthy fats. But is it still a good choice today? Whether we choose cooked fish or sushi in a restaurant, we buy our fish at the market, or we hook a worm and catch our own, it may not be healthy or safe to eat. And if we bought it, we may be a victim of seafood fraud.

Fishy Bait and Switch Schemes

Seafood fraud is serious business. Oceana has found that, on average, 1 in 5 samples of seafood is mislabeled at every sector of the supply chain. In other words, there is a 1 in 5 chance that the fish you buy at a restaurant or market may not be what you thought you were buying. Chances are, it may not be what they thought they were buying, either.

Oceana reports, "Asian catfish, hake, and escolar were the three types of fish most commonly substituted. Specifically, farmed Asian catfish was sold as 18 different types of higher-value fish."

This isn't just a scam that affects your pocketbook; it may affect your health. "More than half (58 percent) of the samples substituted for other seafood posed a species-specific health risk to consumers, meaning that consumers could be eating fish that could make them sick."

In April 2017, George Washington University published their findings from testing the fish from 6 popular Washington D.C. restaurants. They discovered 1 in 3 samples were not what they claimed to be.

Fish substitution is not only a racket to sell a lower priced

fish at a higher price, it is also a means to sell illegally caught endangered fish.

Related: ***5 Tons of GM Fish Sold for Human Consumption (And only the producer knows where they are)***

Radioactive Fish

Yes, you can find articles claiming that we are being poisoned by radioactive fish, but the sources are… questionable. But then again, can we trust the FDA when they say we are not in danger? The following is a response to a direct inquiry.

"To date, FDA has no evidence that radionuclides are present in the U.S. food supply at levels that would pose a public health concern. This is true for both FDA-regulated food products imported from Japan and U.S. domestic food products, including seafood caught off the coast of the United States. Consequently, FDA is not advising consumers to alter their consumption of specific foods imported from Japan or domestically produced foods, including seafood. FDA continues to closely monitor the situation at and around the Fukushima Dai-ichi facility, as it has since the start of the incident and will coordinate with other Federal and state agencies as necessary, standing ready to take action if needed, to ensure the safety of food in the U.S. marketplace."

So we are eating radioactive fish, but the contamination is at such a low level we don't need to worry? Ah, okay…

Old McDonald Had a Farm…

Think of everything you've ever read or seen about the horrors of factory farming with pigs, chickens, and cows and imagine it's worse for fish – much worse. Half of the fish consumed today are raised in aquafarms under horrific conditions of extreme overcrowding and filth. Some fish are genetically modified to accelerate growth. Hormones are injected to change

reproduction. Antibiotics are added to the water in some countries. Fish that normally eat plants are fed fish and fish oils.

There is a high mortality rate among farm-raised fish. A high percentage of the fish are deaf or blind. Parasitic infestations are common. PETA reports, “Sea lice, for example, eat at the fish, causing their scales to fall off and creating large sores. In severely crowded conditions, these parasites often eat down to the bone on fish’s faces, resulting in what is sometimes called a “death crown.”

So, we are not only looking at genetic modification, disease, hormones, antibiotics, filth, starvation, genetically modified feed, and inhumane treatment, we also color fish. Salmon have artificial coloring added to their feed that changes the color of their flesh. Farm raised salmon are not naturally pink. They are gray. Chemicals are added to their feed to cause their flesh to turn pink. So we are also ingesting those chemicals when we eat farm-raised salmon. Bon appétit!

Related: ***Genetically Modified Salmon Is On Its Way To Your Store***

The Mercurial Rise and More

The level of mercury in fish remains a serious health concern. We are warned to avoid certain fish. Scientific American lists the following as carrying “proportionately large mercury burden.”

- bluefin tuna
- walleye
- king mackerel
- marlin
- bluefish
- shark
- swordfish

- wild sturgeon
- opah
- bigeye tuna

Other fish that are “Also of concern, but to a slightly lesser extent” are:

- orange roughy
- Chilean sea bass
- blue crab
- lingcod
- Spanish mackerel
- spotted seatrout
- wahoo
- grouper
- snapper
- halibut
- tile fish
- rock fish
- sable fish
- blackfin, albacore, and yellowfin tuna.

Top level predators in the fish world accumulate mercury due to longevity and a constant diet of smaller, mercury laden fish. Concentrations in fish can be 1-10 million times higher than the mercury concentration in the water.

The Environmental Defense Fund tells us, “The problem of mercury-contaminated fish is widespread. According to the EPA’s National Listing of Fish Advisories:

- Mercury advisories increased 95% between 2003 and 2010 (from 2,362 to 4,598). This is largely due to greater monitoring, not necessarily greater pollution.
- All 50 states currently issue mercury advisories.
- As of 2010, almost 18 million lake acres and approximately 1.4 million river miles were covered by some type of consumption advisory.

- Currently, 28 states have statewide mercury advisories in freshwater lakes or rivers, and 19 states have statewide advisories for mercury in their coastal waters."

Related: *Top 5 Foods that Detox Heavy Metals and Toxins – With Protocol*

The EPA says, "The 2011 total of 4,821 advisories covers 42% of the Nation's total lake acreage and 36% of the nation's total river miles." But the EPA tells us mercury is not the only contaminant causing concern. "Ninety–four percent of all advisories in effect in 2011 involved five bioaccumulative chemical contaminants: mercury, PCBs, chlordane, dioxins, and DDT." Remember these facts are 6 years old. How much worse is it now?

What Fish Should We Eat?

If you choose to eat fish, which fish should you choose? Clearly, this should be a simple question with an agreed upon list – but it isn't. If you search through article after article on the Internet, zeroing in on trusted sources, you will still find widely varying lists. Although it is common knowledge that tuna is high in mercury, you will find tuna on many of these lists along with shellfish (the scavengers of the sea), and varieties of farm raised fish.

The most agreed upon healthy choices are:

- Alaskan salmon (wild caught)
- Cod
- Mackerel (though Spanish Mackerel is on the "also of concern" list)
- Sardines
- Herring

We advise taking the time to research. Fish is not the same from one store to another. Look into the sustainability and

health issues with each source.

Also: *Seafood & Mercury – What's Safe To Eat & What's Not*

Pollution is the Key

We can hook that worm or cast the perfect fly to catch a fish from a crystal clear lake or flowing stream. But we'd better check the local advisories before we eat it. There's a good chance we'll be advised to limit how much we eat or to avoid feeding our catch to pregnant women, small children, or the elderly.

It's a no brainer. If we continue to pollute the water, we continue to pollute the fish. Although you'd never know it based on our current behavior, our oceans are not a dumping ground. If we continue to burn fossil fuels, we will continue to pump mercury into the air. Mercury will fall to the ground to contaminate the earth and our water. If we continue to use toxic chemicals that run off into our waterways, they will come back to us full circle through our food chain.

We have choices to make. Let's make the right ones. For now? Be careful of the fish you choose to eat.

Recommended Reading:

- *Still, Have Candida? How Mercury Fillings Cause Candida Overgrowth*
- *Wild Caught? Maybe Not – Salmon Sold to You May Have Been Farm-Raised*
- *How To Detoxify and Heal From Vaccinations – For Adults and Children*

Sources:

- *Deceptive Dishes: Seafood Swaps Found Worldwide – Oceana*
- *Why the Fish You Order Isn't Always What You Get – Time*
- *The Lingering Effects of Fukushima on Fish – Time*

- *Aquafarming- PETA*
- *Here’s why your farmed salmon has color added to it – Quartz*
- *Mercury in seafood – Environmental Defense Fund*
- *National Listing of Fish Advisories General Fact Sheet 2011 – EPA*