

Canned tuna: New tests, same risk

Fish is a good source of protein with lots of omega-3 fatty acids. But many species also have high levels of a toxic form of mercury (methylmercury) that can harm the heart and nervous system, and developing fetuses. And new tests from CONSUMER REPORTS provide more evidence that canned tuna continues to be among the species with worrisome mercury levels.

The tests, done by an outside lab, assessed the mercury found in 42 cans and pouches of white (albacore) and light tuna. Every sample had 0.018 to 0.774 parts per million of mercury, with albacore tuna averaging about six times the average level in light tuna.

WHAT TO DO

Mercury in fish poses the biggest risk to pregnant women, those of childbearing age, children, and fetuses, but men and older



women who eat a lot should also consider limits:

Pregnant women: Avoid canned or tuna in pouches entirely, along with other high-mercury fish (shark, swordfish, and tilefish), as a precaution.

Women of childbearing

age: Limit weekly intake to 12.5 oz. of light tuna or 4 oz. of white tuna.

Children under 45 pounds: Limit intake to 4 oz. or less of light tuna or 1.5 oz. or less of white tuna a week, depending on the child's weight.

Children 45 pounds or more: Limit intake to 4 to 12.5 oz. of light tuna or 1.5 to 4 oz. of white tuna weekly, depending on the child's weight.

Men and older women: Limit intake to about 14.5 oz. of light tuna or 5 oz. of white tuna weekly. If you eat fish more often, choose low-mercury kinds like Alaskan salmon, clams, shrimp, and tilapia.