

THE 2014 FDA ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL FISH: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVED DIETARY GUIDANCE

Nutrition Journal, July 2016

THE BACKGROUND

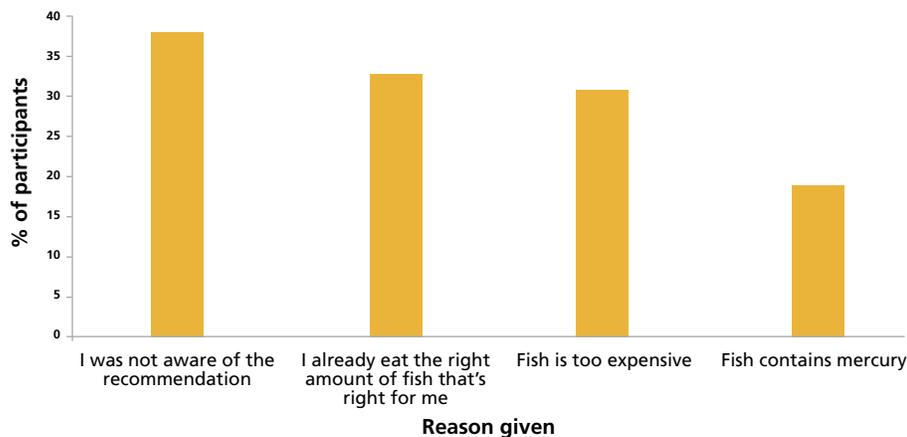
A 2014 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report, *A Quantitative Assessment of the Net Effects on Fetal Neurodevelopment from Eating Commercial Fish (As measured by IQ and also by Early Age Verbal Development in Children)*,



evaluated the benefits and potential concerns of eating fish during pregnancy and suggests moms-to-be who eat two seafood meals (8-12 ounces) per week could provide their child with an additional **3.3 IQ points by age 9.**

THE PROBLEM

Concerns about price and methyl mercury (MeHg) exposure appear to reduce fish consumption in many individuals.



THE SOLUTION

We compared the consumption of select fish species necessary to achieve IQ benefits, the amount necessary to have adverse developmental effects due to MeHg exposure, and the cost-per-week for pregnant women to achieve maximum IQ benefits for their gestating child.



For the species or market types evaluated, the number of servings necessary to reach MeHg exposure to approach an adverse effect was at least twice the amount estimated to achieve peak developmental benefit. **Canned light tuna was the least expensive option at \$1.83 per week to achieve maximum IQ benefit.**

Species or market type	Meals per week for Maximum benefit	Meals per week for possible adverse effects	Cost per week for maximum benefits	Cost per week as a multiple of cost for canned light tuna
Anchovies, Herring, Shad	3	~150	\$5.82	3.18
Fresh Salmon	3 - 4	~330	\$4.52	2.47
Fresh Cod	2 - 3	~70	\$3.50	1.91
Canned Salmon	3 - 4	~330	\$2.61	1.43
Canned Albacore Tuna	2 - 3	~20	\$2.72	1.49
Canned Light Tuna	2 - 3	~90	\$1.83	1



Due to the relatively low cost of canned and pouched fish, **this type of seafood is affordable and popular.**

When eaten regularly, both canned and pouched tuna could provide some of the largest cognitive benefits from fish consumption in the U.S. Future FDA consumer advice and related educational initiatives could benefit from a broader perspective that highlights the importance of affordable and accessible fish choices. These observations underscore the importance of clear public health messaging that address both health benefits and such real-world considerations as cost and convenience.



NATIONAL FISHERIES INSTITUTE



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