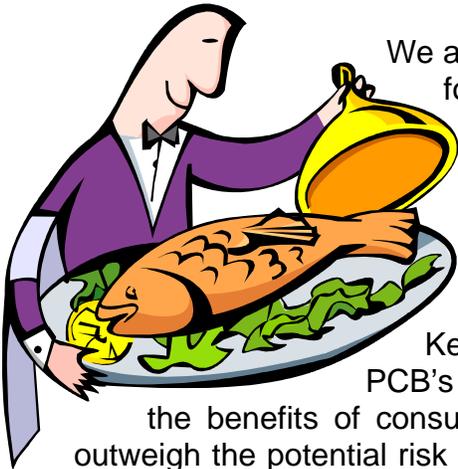


Seafood Safety



We are encouraged to consume 2-3 meals of fish per week for heart health, yet recently there have been reports regarding the safety of consuming some seafood. The safety issue is linked to possible contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) and mercury. Studies have found that both farm raised and wild salmon can contain harmful PCB's. According to Cornell University Seafood Specialist Ken Gall it's uncertain whether the small amounts of PCB's seafood contains will cause cancer. Most experts feel the benefits of consuming omega 3 fatty acids in salmon and other fish outweigh the potential risk of contaminants in the fish. Omega 3 fatty acids offer some level of protection against heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke.

Pregnant women and young children do need to take special precautions. High levels of mercury can cause neurological damage to the growing fetus. In March 2004, the FDA set strict guidelines for pregnant women and those who plan on becoming pregnant. They should avoid swordfish, shark, tilefish and king mackerel since they typically have high levels of mercury. Although the FDA did not limit fresh and canned tuna, most experts advice pregnant women to limit tuna steaks and canned albacore tuna to one serving per week or less. Do note that canned light tuna is considered safe since it is made with skipjack fish that is typically low in mercury.

Another healthful tip is to vary the fish you eat so that you minimize your risk for harmful contaminants that may be found in one type of fish. Some lower mercury options include: shrimp, salmon, Pollock, farm raised catfish, tilapia, flounder, sole, scallops, haddock, farm raised trout, herring, crayfish, mullet, oysters, ocean perch, sardines, squid, white fish and anchovies.

For those who don't eat fish, fish oil supplements maybe helpful. Currently, the American Heart Association recommends 1,000 milligrams of fish oil supplements for people with heart disease. Check with your health care provider before taking any supplement.