






Safe weekly amounts of mercury in fish

Florida testing for mercury in a variety of fish is helpful for calculating the amount of seafood a person can eat, and still stay within the EPA Reference Dose for mercury — the amount of mercury a person can consume on a continuing basis without fear of ill effects.

Safe amounts of fish are calculated by weekly doses. Amounts are cumulative; each meal must be counted against the weekly reference dose. Mercury amounts vary from fish to fish, and the averages below should serve only as guidelines.

How to use the chart

When calculating weekly allowances of fish, refer to the box closest to your weight and see the safe amount in ounces (a typical serving of fish is about 6 ounces). For instance, if you weigh 150 pounds you should limit yourself to 4.6 ounces per week of red grouper. For snook you could eat no more than 4.2 ounces per week. To eat more than one kind of fish or more than one fish meal per week, you would want to select species with high allowances, such as mullet (72.4 ounces per week) or sand bream (22.4 ounces).

COMMON NAME	PPM MERCURY	WEIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL				
		50 LBS	100 LBS	150 LBS	200 LBS	250 LBS
MARKET SAMPLING						
Smoked Salmon (Unspecified species)	0.039	14.8 oz.	29.6	44.4	59.2	73.0
Salmon (Unspecified species)	0.04	14.3	28.6	42.9	57.1	70.5
Vermillion Snapper	0.051	11.2	22.4	33.6	44.8	55.3
Crabmeat (lump)	0.066	8.7	17.3	26.0	34.6	42.7
Yellowtail Snapper	0.078	7.3	14.7	22.0	29.4	36.3
Crabmeat (claw)	0.092	6.2	12.4	18.6	24.8	30.7
Lane Snapper	0.182	3.1	6.3	9.4	12.6	15.5
Canned Tuna (Light)	0.205	2.8	5.6	8.4	11.1	13.8
Alligator	0.267	2.1	4.3	6.4	8.6	10.6
Gag Grouper	0.271	2.1	4.2	6.3	8.4	10.4
Canned Tuna (White)	0.345	1.7	3.3	5.0	6.6	8.2
Red Grouper 	0.373	1.5	3.1	4.6	6.1	7.6
Dolphin (Mahi)	0.379	1.5	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.4
Red Snapper	0.415	1.4	2.8	4.1	5.5	6.8
Tuna steak or fillet	0.463	1.2	2.5	3.7	4.9	6.1
Barracuda	0.497	1.1	2.3	3.4	4.6	5.7
King Mackerel	0.644	0.9	1.8	2.7	3.5	4.4
Yellowfin Tuna	0.691	0.8	1.7	2.5	3.3	4.1
Swordfish	1.51	0.4	0.8	1.1	1.5	1.9
Shark (Unspecified species)	2.577	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.9	1.1
STATE SAMPLING FROM LEE AND CHARLOTTE COUNTIES						
Striped mullet	0.024	24.1 oz.	48.3	72.4	96.6	119.2
Striped mojarra (Sand bream)	0.077	7.5	14.9	22.4	29.9	36.9
Black drum	0.078	7.3	14.7	22.0	29.3	36.2
Permit	0.12	4.8	9.5	14.3	19.0	23.5
Gray snapper	0.175	3.3	6.5	9.8	13.1	16.1
Sheepshead	0.193	3.0	5.9	8.9	11.8	14.6
Gag grouper	0.2	2.9	5.7	8.6	11.4	14.1
Red drum (redfish) 	0.222	2.6	5.1	7.7	10.3	12.7
Hardhead catfish	0.224	2.5	5.1	7.6	10.2	12.6
Yellowedge grouper	0.234	2.4	4.9	7.3	9.8	12.1
Pompano	0.275	2.1	4.2	6.2	8.3	10.3
Silver perch	0.29	2.0	3.9	5.9	7.9	9.7
Atlantic spadefish	0.334	1.7	3.4	5.1	6.8	8.4
Bonnethead	0.337	1.7	3.4	5.1	6.8	8.4
Ladyfish	0.345	1.7	3.3	5.0	6.6	8.2
Gulf flounder 	0.348	1.6	3.3	4.9	6.6	8.1
Blacknose shark	0.35	1.6	3.3	4.9	6.5	8.1
Barracuda (one 11-inch fish)	0.36	1.6	3.2	4.8	6.3	7.8
Southern kingfish (whiting)	0.361	1.6	3.2	4.7	6.3	7.8
Mutton snapper	0.4	1.4	2.9	4.3	5.7	7.1
Snook 	0.41	1.4	2.8	4.2	5.6	6.9
Spotted seatrout 	0.434	1.3	2.6	3.9	5.3	6.5
White grunt	0.444	1.3	2.6	3.9	5.1	6.4
Crevalle jack	0.515	1.1	2.2	3.3	4.4	5.5
Spanish mackerel	0.516	1.1	2.2	3.3	4.4	5.5
Bluefish	0.572	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.9
Cobia	0.683	0.8	1.7	2.5	3.3	4.1
Lemon shark	0.697	0.8	1.6	2.5	3.3	4.0
Gafftopsail catfish	0.714	0.8	1.6	2.4	3.2	4.0
Blacktip shark	0.789	0.7	1.4	2.2	2.9	3.6
Sand seatrout	0.815	0.7	1.4	2.1	2.8	3.5
Bull shark	0.973	0.6	1.2	1.8	2.3	2.9

NOTE: Reference doses calculated by The News-Press

SOURCES: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION; FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES