

Important developmental and health benefits to eating more fish

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The Professional Fishermen's Association of New South Wales welcomes updated advice that confirms that eating more fish provides important developmental and health benefits.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency yesterday issued draft updated advice on fish consumption. The two agencies concluded that pregnant and breastfeeding women, those who might become pregnant, and young children should eat more fish in order to gain important developmental and health benefits. The advice also stipulated the need to eat a variety of fish from choices that are lower in mercury.

Tricia Beatty, Executive Officer for the Professional Fishermen's Association said "Our local NSW fishing fleet is bringing in fresh fish that is low in mercury and high in quality". As quoted from the FDA's recent news release "emerging science now shows that limiting or avoiding fish during pregnancy and early childhood can mean missing out on important nutrients that can have a positive impact on growth and development as well as on general health."

"The U.S. FDA's information reaffirms what we've always known, that fish is good for you and it is important to include it within your diet," Ms Beatty said. The FDA's draft updated advice recommends pregnant women eat at least 227 grams and up to 340 grams (2-3 servings) per week of a variety of fish that are lower in mercury to support fetal growth and development.

The draft updated advice did caution pregnant or breastfeeding women to avoid four types of fish that are associated with high mercury levels: tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico; shark; swordfish; and king mackerel and limiting the consumptions of white (albacore tuna) to 170grams a week.

"There are lots of species of fish that are brought in by our proud NSW commercial fishermen that tick all the boxes for good health benefits. I encourage everyone to buy seafood that is local and fresh by buying from your local fishermen's cooperative or directly from your local commercial fishermen," Ms Beatty advised.

The PFA applauds the release of the U.S. FDA and EPA draft advice and hopes that the Australian Government and Food Standards Australia New Zealand take note of these finding and look towards updating our own Australian standards. "It is important that these findings are recognised and promoted to Australian pregnant and breastfeeding women, those who might become pregnant, and young children," Ms Beatty said.

Our industry plays an essential part in both the health of Australia's economy and the health of our nation through the supply of local, sustainable seafood," Ms Beatty said.

For more information regarding the U.S. FDA & EPA draft updated advice on fish consumption, please visit their website at

www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/Metals/ucm393070.htm.

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