



# CONSUMPTION ADVICE REGARDING MERCURY IN FISH FROM THE SPANISH AGENCY FOR FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION (AESAN) 2019

Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition(AESAN)

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality

Alcalá, 56 (office 453) 28014 MADRID

http://www.aecosan.mscbs.gob.es/





### Informe del Comité Científico de la Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición (AESAN) en relación a los niveles de mercurio establecidos para los productos de la pesca

### Miembros del Comité Científico

Andreu Palou Oliver, Juan José Badiola Díez, Arturo Anadón Navarro, Albert Bosch Navarro, Juan Francisco Cacho Palomar, Ana María Cameán Fernández, Alberto Cepeda Sáez, Lucas Domínguez Rodríguez, Rosaura Farré Rovira, Manuela Juárez Iglesias, Francisco Martín Bermudo, Manuel Martín Esteban, Albert Más Barón, Teresa Ortega Hernández-Agero, Andrés Otero Carballeira, Perfecto Paseiro Losada, Daniel Ramón Vidal, Elías Rodríguez Ferri, Mª Carmen Vidal Carou, Gonzalo Zurera Cosano

### Secretario

Jesús Campos Amado

Número de referencia: AESAN-2010-008

Documento aprobado por el Comité Científico en
su sesión plenaria de 28 de septiembre de 2010

### Grupo de Trabajo

Rosaura Farré Rovira (Coordinadora)
Ana María Cameán Fernández
Mª Carmen Vidal Carou
Ana López-Santacruz Serraller (AESAN)
Victorio J. Teruel Muñoz (AESAN)

revista

29

Report of the Scientific Committee of the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN) in regard to the levels of mercury established for fish products.



### **Abstract**

In fish and shellfish, mercury (Hg) is mostly found in the form of methyl mercury (MeHg), its most toxic form. The highest contents are present in predators. The FAO/WHO (2003) has provisionally established a tolerable weekly intake (PTWI) for MeHg of 1.6 µg/kg of bodyweight.

Women of child-bearing age, during pregnancy or breastfeeding, and children are the most vulnerable groups. In view of the impossibility of establishing stricter Hg contents in fish, the European Commission (2008) has urged Member States to draft recommendations in order to protect these groups. Thus, attempts have been made to estimate the portion sizes and consumption frequencies that would provide intakes in consumed fish in Spain lower than the PTWI and therefore can be considered as safe.

The available data on Hg and MeHg contents, the estimated intakes and the assessments of exposure to Hg, particularly among consumers belonging to the risk groups, do not recommend any increase in the maximum Hg limits established by the European Union (EU, 2006) for fish.





### RECOMENDATIONS OF FISH CONSUMPTION 2011

Pescados	Mujeres en edad fértil embarazadas o en período de lactancia	Niños <3 años	Niños 3-12 años
Pez espada Tiburón Atún rojo* Lucio	Evitar su consumo	Evitar su consumo	Limitar a 50 gr/semana o 100 gr/2 semanas (no consumir ningún otro de los pescados de esta categoría en la misma semana)

<sup>\*</sup>Thunnus thynnus (especie grande, normalmente consumida en fresco o congelada y fileteada)



### **POPULATION AT RISK**



WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT, WHO MAY BECOME PREGNANT OR WHO

ARE BREASTFEEDING.
CHILDREN 0-10 YEARS
OLD.

SPECIES WITH HIGH LEVELS OF MERCURY

SPECIES WITH LOW TO MEDIUM LEVELS AVOID CONSUMPTION

3-4 SERVING OF FISH PER WEEK

Try to vary between white fish and oily fish



CHILDREN BETWEEN 10 - 14 YEARS SPECIES WITH HIGH LEVELS OF MERCURY

SPECIES WITH LOW TO MEDIUM LEVELS LIMIT CONSUMPTION TO 120 grams PER MONTH

3-4 SERVING OF FISH PER WEEK

Try to vary between white fish and oily fish

### **GENERAL POPULATION**



ALL SPECIES 3 - 4 SERVING OF FISH PER WEEK

Try to vary between white fish and oily fish.





### **SPECIES**



SPECIES WITH HIGH MERCURY LEVELS: Swordfish, Bluefin Tuna, (*Thunnus thynnus*), Shark (dogfish, porbeagle, spiny dogfish, spotted dogfish and blue shark), and Pike.

SPECIES WITH LOW MERCURY LEVELS: Anchovy, Atlantic cod, Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic salmon, Blue jack mackerel, Blue mussel, Blue whiting, Clam, Common carp, Common dab, Common octopus, Common prawn, Common prawn, Common sole, Common spiny lobster, Common squids, Cuttlefish, Donax clams, European seabass, Fringe-scale sardinella, Giant cupped oyster, Gilthead seabream, Great tit, Hake, Hen fish, Lemon sole, Marine crab, Murex, Norway lobster, Pacific salmon, Painted river prawn, Penaeus shrimps, Plaice Pollack, Ray's bream, Razor shell, Sardine, Sardinops, Sea trout, Short anchovy, Shrimp, Sprat, Squid, Stoker, Striped venus and Whiting. Other fishery products not specifically mentioned shall be understood to have MEDIUM LEVELS of mercury.





Mercury is an environmental pollutant that is found in our foods due to its natural presence in the Earth's crust and as a result of human activity. It is mainly present in fish in the form methylmercury.

Starting with its release into the environment, mercury is present in sea and rivers water and may be concentrated, in varying proportions, in fish. The amount of mercury in fish is related to its position in the food chain. This means that large, long-lived predatory fish, such as swordfish, shark, red tuna and pike have higher mercury levels. This is known as bioaccumulation.

Mercury may affect the developing central nervous system by direct exposure after consuming certain foods, or indirectly as it can cross the placenta. It may also be present in breast milk.

Therefore, women who are pregnant or who may become pregnant, those who are breastfeeding and young children are the most vulnerable population to mercury.

Yes. Eating fish is safe and healthy.

In European food legislation, there are mandatory maximum mercury limits controlled by health authorities that guarantee the safe consumption of foods by the population. Furthermore, fish consumption comes with health benefits given that it provides energy, is a source of proteins of high biological value and contributes to the intake of essential nutrients such as iodine, selenium, calcium, and vitamins A and D. It also has a good lipid profile, providing long chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, a component of the dietary patterns associated with good health, and few saturated fatty acids.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) associated normal fish has consumption during pregnancy with beneficial effects on neurodevelopment in children and with a reduced risk of mortality from coronary heart disease in adults.









## REASONS TO UPDATE: 1. NEW SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

- EFSA (2012). Scientific Opinion on the risk for public health related to the presence of mercury and methylmercury in food.
  - EFSA (2014). Scientific Opinion on health benefits of seafood (fish and shellfish) consumption in relation to health risks associated with exposure to methylmercury
  - EFSA (2015). Statement on the benefits of fish/seafood consumption compared to the risks of methylmercury in fish/seafood





### $1.6 \mu g/kg bw$



### Methyl-Mercury TOLERABLE WEEKLY INTAKE (TWI)

 $1,3 \mu g/kg bw$ 



# REASONS TO UPDATE: 2. NEW MONITORING DATA AND CONSUMPTION DATA







### **REASONS TO UPDATE:** 3. AWARENESS



**40.000 TO PRIMARY CARE CENTERS AND HOSPITALS** 



### **REASONS TO UPDATE: 3. GENERAL NUTRITION RECOMENDATIONS**

### 3-4 SERVINGS FOR GENERAL POPULATION IS A CONSUMPTION ADVICE BASED ON NUTRITIONAL CRITERIA

Consumption of about 1-2 servings of seafood per week and up to 3-4 servings per week during pregnancy has been associated with better functional outcomes of neurodevelopment in children compared to no seafood. Such amounts have also been associated with a lower risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) mortality in adults and are compatible with current intakes and recommendations in most of the European countries considered. These associations refer to seafood per se and include beneficial and adverse effects of nutrients and non-nutrients (i.e. including contaminants such as methylmercury) contained in seafood. No additional benefits on neurodevelopmental outcomes and no benefit on CHD mortality risk might be expected at higher intakes......" no benefit might be expected at higher intakes (> 4-5 servings per week)"





### POPULATION AT RISK- SPECIES WITH HIGH LEVELS OF MERCURY

WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT, WHO MAY BECOME PREGNANT OR WHO ARE BREASTFEEDING. CHILDREN 0-10 YEARS OLD.

**AVOID CONSUMPTION** 

BETWEEN 10 - 14 YEARS

**LIMIT CONSUMPTION TO 120 gr MONTH** 

### **GENERAL POPULATION- ALL FISHERY PRODUCTS**

3 - 4 SERVINGS OF FISH PER WEEK. Try to vary between white fish and oily fish.





**DE LA AGENCIA ESPAÑOLA DE SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA Y NUTRICIÓN (AESAN)** 



### **POBLACIÓN VULNERABLE**



ESPECIES ALTO CONTENIDO EN MERCURIO

**ESPECIES BAJO** Y MEDIO CONTENIDO EN MERCURIO

**EVITAR CONSUMO** 

DE PESCADO POR SEMANA

3 - 4 RACIONES Procurando variar las



NIÑOS ENTRE 10 -14 AÑOS

**ESPECIES ALTO** CONTENIDO **EN MERCURIO** 

**ESPECIES BAJO** Y MEDIO CONTENIDO EN MERCURIO

LIMITAR EL CONSUMO

3 - 4 RACIONES

### POBLACIÓN GENERAL



**TODAS** LAS **ESPECIES**  3 - 4 RACIONES DE PESCADO POR SEMANA

Procurando variar las especies entre pescados blancos y azules.

### **ESPECIES**



### ABC SOCIEDAD

España + Internacional Economía + Sociedad Madrid + Familia + Opinión + Deportes + Gente + Cultura + Ciencia Historia Viajar + Play + B

### Sanidad pide limitar el consumo de pescado por la presencia de mercurio

• Según sus nuevos estándares, piden reducir la ingesta de cualquier especie de pescado a 3 o 4 raciones por semana población general



Mejor enti de Banca Pri

EL ESPAÑOL



La Agencia Española Seguridad

Alimentaria y Nutrición (AESAN), dependiente del Ministerio de Sanida

### Ni atún ni pez espada en la dieta infan



Ronqueo de atún rojo de almadraba en Madrid. Gtres.

### Alerta de Sanidad por mercurio en el pescado: éstas son las nuevas recomendaciones

La Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición ha actualizado su quía de consumo de pescado para prevenir la intoxicación por mercurio.

3 noviembre, 2019 - 01:59





### ConSalud.es



M NEWSLETTER

# Sanidad recomienda evitar el consumo de pescado alto en mercurio a embarazadas y menores de 10 años

La Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición (AESAN) ha establecido una serie de recomendaciones de consumo debido a la presencia de mercurio en algunos pescados.

