

Vital Choice's Purity Story

Rest assured ... Vital Choice wild fish and shellfish are exceptionally safe. Here's the story:

Our fish are very low in mercury

All of our fish are exceptionally low in mercury, for two reasons: We feature species that are inherently low in mercury: Salmon, Sablefish, Sardines, Scallops, Prawns, and Crab. And, we offer only younger, smaller –hence low-mercury – members of predatory species (Halibut and Albacore Tuna).



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was very conservative in setting the legal limit for mercury at 1 ppm (parts per million), which is 10 times lower than the very lowest level associated with mercury poisoning. The minuscule amounts of mercury in our fish fall very far below this conservative safety level. For example:

- Vital Choice Salmon: At 0.03 to 0.05 parts per million (ppm) mercury, our wild Salmon (Sockeye, Silver and King) has about *25 times less mercury than is allowed under FDA rules* (1 ppm).
- Vital Choice Tuna: At 0.08 ppm, our small, troll-caught Albacore Tuna has *42 times less mercury*, compared with standard canned Albacore (0.34 ppm).
- Vital Choice Halibut: At 0.08 ppm, our Halibut has *3 times less mercury*, compared with standard Halibut (0.26 ppm).
- Vital Choice Sablefish: At 0.07 ppm, our Sablefish has *3 times less mercury*, compared with standard Sablefish (0.22 ppm).

Are Mercury fears overstated?

It makes sense to minimize intake of fish that are high in mercury. But recent research results indicate that the rewards of eating most ocean fish outweigh the hypothetical risk of harm. Substantial evidence indicates that the risks from mercury in *ocean* fish are reduced by their high levels of selenium. (Fresh water fish are often low in selenium, and some are high in mercury.) This may be one reason why people in Japan and the Seychelles Islands, who eat far more ocean fish of the same kinds that Americans do, show no signs of harm from mercury.

Our fish are very low in PCBs

All of our fish and shellfish are extremely low in PCBs: persistent pollutants that accumulate in the fat of long-lived fish and land animals over time. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are oily mixtures of up to 209 individual chlorinated industrial chemicals (congeners), which include dioxins and furans. PCBs can harm health and were banned in the U.S. in 1977 because they persist in the environment. They accumulate in the fat of long-lived animals and ones that live in especially contaminated environments. The main food sources* of PCBs are butter and other fatty dairy products, long-lived predatory ocean fish, sport fish from contaminated lakes or rivers, and meats.

According to U.S. FDA guidelines, the traces of PCBs in wild Salmon are so minuscule that it is completely safe to enjoy these fish freely and frequently. As is the case with mercury, *our fish are inherently low in PCBs*, either because they are naturally short-lived or because we pick only young, small members of the species (e.g., our Halibut and Tuna). The trace levels of PCBs in Wild Alaskan (and Canadian) Salmon – about 2 parts per billion – are *1,000 times lower than the safety limit* of 2 parts per million set both by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Farmed Salmon contain 10 to 20 times more PCBs than wild Salmon. This is because they are fed diets higher in fat, hence higher in PCBs, too. Even the substantially higher PCB levels in farmed Salmon fall very far short of the FDA safety limit. But, together with an inferior fatty acid profile – high in omega-6 fats, which compete with omega-3s – their higher PCB levels explain why many health experts consider farmed Salmon significantly less healthful than wild Salmon.

*Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Food safety and PCBs found in fish. January 12, 2004. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/2004/2004_pcb-bpc_e.html.

A word about antibiotics

Most of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported, and much of it is farm-raised, with little oversight regarding use of antibiotic drugs or additives. While the U.S. government has standards that should ban imports with high levels of antibiotics in seafood, there is essentially no enforcement.

Antibiotic resistance is an increasing problem in human health, and these drugs can be harmful if consumed via food. Farmed Salmon have more antibiotics administered by weight than any other form of livestock, with Chilean farms being among the worst offenders. This presents problems for human health and harms the ocean ecosystem that surrounds a fish farm.

Alaskan Salmon: Paragons of purity

Alaskan Salmon are relatively small, short-lived fish that swim in remote, pristine waters. Consequently, they contain far lower levels of contaminants than those found in larger, longer-lived carnivorous species. For these reasons, the EPA, FDA, Alaska Division of Public Health and others recommend wild Alaskan Salmon without reservation. And unlike farmed Salmon, wild Alaskan Salmon species grow free of antibiotics, pesticides, synthetic coloring agents, growth hormones and GMOs.

"The risk of mercury in Salmon appears to be minimal. In fact, the FDA states that limiting consumption is unnecessary for [wild] Salmon."

– *Environmental Working Group*

"... contaminant levels in [wild Salmon] do not warrant a consumption advisory."

– *Oceans Alive*