Seafood Health Facts: Making Smart choices
Balancing the Benefits and Risks of Seafood Consumption
Resources for Healthcare Providers and Consumers

Seafood Safety Overview [1]

Bacteria that can cause illness are the main concern with regard to seafood safety. When seafood is properly handled and cooked, the risks are minimal. Poor handling practices, such as raw foods coming in contact with cooked foods (cross-contamination) and lack of proper temperature control can also lead to food borne illness. Other food safety concerns relate to naturally occurring or man made toxins that are associated with the waters or environment where fish and shellfish live. People who catch their own fish or shellfish are at greatest risk for coming into contact with these toxins.

The following tips can help seafood consumers and recreational fishermen minimize potential food safety concerns.

To reduce your risk of food borne illness:

Keep fish frozen or refrigerated below 40°F until ready to use.

Separate cooked and raw seafood. Wash utensils, cutting boards and any surfaces that comes into contact with raw seafood or other foods before re-using.

Wash hands before and after handling raw or cooked food.

Cook seafood thoroughly to an internal temperature of 145°F for at least 15 seconds. Check temperatures with a food thermometer in the thickest part of the fillet or steak. Properly cooked seafood should be moist and solid-color throughout.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid keeping seafood products at temperatures between 40–140°F.

Purchase seafood from retailers that have high standards for quality and sanitation.

To reduce your risk from contaminants:

Higher risk individuals including women of childbearing age, pregnant women and children should not eat sport caught fish from contaminated waters.

All individuals should check with their state health department's fish consumption advisories or go to this web site [2] before eating sport caught fish.

Individuals who chose to eat fish that may contain contaminants can reduce their exposure to PCBs, pesticides or other chemicals by removing the skin from fish and trimming the fat.

Higher risk individuals including pregnant women, women who intend to become pregnant, and children should not eat swordfish, tilefish , shark, or king mackerel because they have higher levels of mercury.

Source URL:
https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood-safety/general-information-patients-and-consumers/seafood-safety-overview

Links
[1] https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood-safety/general-information-patients-and-consumers/seafood-safety-overview
[2] http://epa.gov/waterscience/fish/states.htm