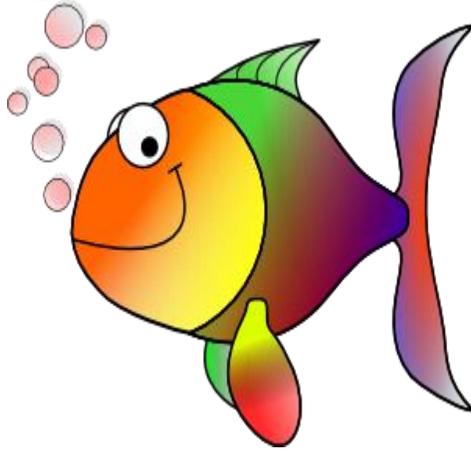


Why Not Eat Fish?



Fish has many problems, despite its reputation as a "health" food. I know a lot of people on the following continuum: as their diet evolves, many people go from red meat, to chicken, to fish, to dairy products, and finally to a vegetarian diet, and then a vegan diet with no animal products. If you are on this continuum of moving towards a pure vegetarian diet, you are truly on the right path. I do not want to make you feel uneasy. But if you are in chicken and fish land, I urge you -- do not linger there too long.

Fish for Essential Fatty Acids?

Some people may have heard that fish are good sources of essential fatty acids. However, the high amounts of fat and cholesterol and the lack of fiber make fish a poor choice. Fish are also often high in mercury and other environmental toxins that have no place in an optimal diet.

Fish oils have been popularized as an aid against everything from heart problems to arthritis. The bad news about fish oils is that omega-3s in fish oils are highly unstable molecules that tend to decompose and, in the process, unleash dangerous free radicals. Research has shown that omega-3s are found in a more stable form in vegetables, fruits, and beans.

Fish these days, besides being very concentrated protein, is by far the most polluted of all the flesh foods. For this reason, fish do not offer much at all in the way of a health food. If you want the benefits of omega 3 oils found in fish, eat nuts and flaxseed. It's better and safer for you and the environment.

Fish is high in cholesterol. In fact, in terms of calories consumed, fish has about twice the amount of cholesterol than does pork or beef. Sea life such as crab, shrimp and lobster contain even more cholesterol. Studies in which persons switched from a beef/egg diet to a diet high in chicken and fish have repeatedly shown that there is no drop in serum cholesterol levels.

Whether you are interested in promoting cardiovascular health, ensuring the proper growth and development of your child, or relieving pain, a vegetarian diet rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes can help you achieve adequate intake of the essential fatty acids.

For many people, fish and seafood became the "health" food of the 90's. They switched from eating cows and chicken to eating more fish. But is fish really healthier or safer to eat than meat?

Well, when it comes to food poisoning, the answer is a definite "no!" In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 325,000 people get food poisoning and some die every year in the U.S. from

eating fish and contaminated sea life (including clams, lobsters, etc). A major study a few years ago found more than half of all seafood, either fresh or canned, is rancid, came from polluted waters or has excessive mercury. Eating sea animals or “seafood” is like playing Russian Roulette.

Government regulators (FDA, USDA, and NIH) warn consumers that consumption of fish can be dangerous. If fish is to be considered as healthy food, then we should assume that the fish are living in a healthy environment. Far from it! All the pollution created on land from industry, farming practices and general waste is gradually carried by streams and rivers into the sea. Strong poisons like mercury, organophosphates, dioxins, radio activity and PCBs accumulate in the sea and are taken up by the marine life.

SALMON: Salmon farms, which are the feedlots of the sea, are an enormous source of chemical and fecal waste. Farmed salmon are also fed more antibiotics per pound than any other farmed animal, creating more drug resistant bacteria.

To make matters worse, **farmed salmon** are bad for you. They contain more saturated fats than wild salmon, have much higher levels of toxic chemicals in their fats, and their flesh has to be dyed with artificial colorants to make it look like natural pink salmon flesh.

The blood-thinning properties of fish oil have been widely trumpeted as a possible “magic bullet” against heart disease (e.g. krill). But thinning the blood has other unpleasant properties. Eskimos, for example, who eat lots and lots of fish, are known to suffer from fatal nosebleeds; and they also have an increased risk of dying from strokes. Fish oil is high in cholesterol and fat and appears to promote gallbladder disease.

If fish is the last animal product in your diet -- again, have no worries about letting her swim off your plate all together. Fish suffer greatly when caught and killed for their flesh. Whether caught by hook or net, fish experience fear – as evidenced by increased heart and breathing rates – just as humans do.

Fishing is Cruel:

Fish, along with unintentional victims, including dolphins, birds and turtles are captured in huge trawler's nets, squeezed for hours along with any netted rocks and debris. Dragged from the ocean depths, fish undergo excruciating decompression – often the intense internal pressure ruptures their swim bladder, pops out their eyes, and pushes their stomach through their mouth.

Then they are tossed onboard where many slowly suffocate or are crushed to death. Others are still alive when their throats and bellies are cut open. Factory-farmed fish are subjected to intensive overcrowding and unnatural conditions, which spread infection and parasites. So fish farmers use antibiotics and hormones to make fish fatter, faster.

Incidentally, the suffering which fish endure in being caught is considerably greater than the suffering which they would endure by being eaten by a bigger fish (which is probably minimal). While fish may stop flopping around fairly quickly after being caught and hauled on board a shipping vessel, they can and do survive for an hour, or often several hours, before dying of suffocation. Imagine having your head held under water as you struggle for air. Now imagine this struggle continuing on for several hours.

Imagine reaching for an apple on a tree and having your hand suddenly impaled by a metal hook that drags you-the whole weight of your body pulling on that one hand-out of the air and into an atmosphere in which you cannot breathe. This is what fish-who have well-developed pain receptors -experience when they are hooked for “sport.”