

# clearwater food safety fact sheet

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS

*Everyone at Clearwater understands that the seafood we handle will become the centrepiece of our customers' next meal. Our commitment to the best food safety practices and our passion for continuous improvement help ensure our seafood is always a safe and healthy choice.*

*Food Safety Vision Statement, Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership*

Seafood is a great source of protein, low in fat, and a healthy choice for a well balanced diet. Clearwater is a leader in providing the highest quality seafood eating experience and customer care is a key pillar in our success. We feel that it is important to keep you informed about food safety and have developed a series of fact sheets for your interest. Please see our Food Safety Overview to learn more about Clearwater's commitment and best practices regarding food safety.

### This Fact Sheet Includes information on:

- Methyl mercury in seafood
- Details on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) monitoring and guidelines for methyl mercury in seafood
- The safety of Clearwater products with regard to methyl mercury

### Methyl Mercury in Seafood

Methyl mercury is an environmental contaminant that can occur in seafood. Environmental contaminants are compounds that are toxic to humans and include a variety of different metals, and organic and inorganic compounds. Mercury is a mineral that naturally exists in the environment but can also be added to the natural environment through pollution. Once in the environment, mercury can be transformed by natural processes into methyl mercury (MeHg) and can accumulate in marine and freshwater ecosystems, potentially contaminating fish and shellfish that live

in these ecosystems. Concentrations of methyl mercury are not related to the manner in which food is handled or prepared but are related to the environment an animal lives in or its position in the food chain.

### CFIA Monitoring and Guidelines

In all but a few cases consuming seafood presents a low risk and provides nutritional benefits that far outweigh the risk to people from methyl mercury contamination. According to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), research has shown that the consumption of fish by most members of the general public is a health benefit, not a health concern. Certain people such as women who are pregnant or are planning to become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children are more susceptible to impacts from methyl mercury and for these groups Health Canada recommends consuming only in moderation those seafood products that have elevated levels of methyl mercury.

The CFIA performs regular testing on commercial fish and shellfish in Canada to verify that the level of methyl mercury is within Health Canada's mercury guideline of 0.5 parts per million (ppm). If, after laboratory testing the CFIA finds a species to have unacceptable toxin levels, consumption restrictions are released for that species. **This does not mean that the species is not safe to eat.** Consumption restrictions include guidance on the appropriate amount of that particular type of seafood that should be consumed by at-risk groups such as pregnant women and children. There are no Health Canada restrictions on the consumption of most species of seafood. The species that are most likely to exceed the Health Canada level of 0.5 ppm are shark, swordfish, and fresh or frozen tuna.

## Clearwater Products - A Safe Choice

Clearwater's products do not pose a risk with respect to methyl mercury and other environmental contaminants. Our products are among a variety of types of seafood that account for having the lowest traces of methyl mercury, compared to all seafood. The table gives the typical amounts of methyl mercury found in selected seafood options.

Clearwater is committed to offering the highest quality seafood and we continue to actively engage with Health Canada and CFIA to understand and accurately communicate the benefits and risks of seafood consumption for the health of our customers.

Clearwater's food safety program is unmatched in the industry, and you can be assured that our seafood offerings continue to be safe and of the highest and most consistent quality in the world.

### For more information:

Health Canada's Information Update on Mercury in Fish (March 2007) available here: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/\\_2007/2007\\_31-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/_2007/2007_31-eng.php)

Health Canada (March 2007) Human Health Risk Assessment of Mercury in Fish and Health Benefits of Fish Consumption [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt\\_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/nutrition/merc\\_fish\\_poisson-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/nutrition/merc_fish_poisson-eng.pdf)

Species	Methyl Mercury Level (ppm)
Shrimp	Undetectable
Clams	Undetectable
Herring	0.04
Scallop	0.05
Crabs	0.06
Cod	0.11
Lobster	0.31
Health Canada's Mercury Guideline	0.50
Grouper	0.55
Red Snapper	0.60
Swordfish	0.97
Shark	0.99

Source: American Heart Association:  
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3013797>

*Clearwater is recognized for consistently exceptional seafood. We take pride in our scallop, lobster, shrimp, clam, crab, masago and groundfish products because we know they comprise wholesome and nutritious food choices for our customers and their families.*

For additional information contact [foodsafety@clearwater.ca](mailto:foodsafety@clearwater.ca)



*Dedicated to Sustainable Seafood Excellence*



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