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### ***What Nutritional Value Does Seafood Offer You and Your Family?***

Seafood can provide nutritional value before, during and after pregnancy.

- **Protein:** Protein is an essential nutrient for you and your family. Seafood is an important source of high-quality protein, particularly during pregnancy and nursing.
- **DHA Long-Chain Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** DHA long-chain omega-3 fatty acids are an essential nutrient during pregnancy and while nursing. Ocean fish is the most reliable dietary source of DHA.
- **Minerals and Vitamins:** Seafood provides essential minerals and vitamins during pregnancy and while nursing, including selenium, iodine, vitamin D, B-complex and zinc.

### ***What Benefits Does Seafood Provide You and Your Family?***

Nutrition plays a major role before, during and after pregnancy; including seafood in your diet can provide a wide range of benefits.

- **Brain Development:** Infants need DHA for prenatal and postnatal neural development. DHA helps to improve vision as well as cognitive, motor and behavioral skills.
- **Preterm Birth Reduction:** DHA intake has been linked to a reduction in preterm birth.
- **Postpartum Depression Prevention and Management:** DHA intake has been linked to prevention and management of postpartum depression.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** DHA has been shown to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease.

### ***What Types of Seafood Should You Eat Before and During Pregnancy as well as Postpartum?***

It is important to consume seafood, including oily ocean fish, which are the richest fish sources of DHA.

- Ocean fish, such as salmon, tuna, sardines and mackerel, are sources that meet the need for DHA in pregnancy; they also provide a lean protein source with important micronutrients like selenium, iodine, vitamin D, B-complex and zinc.

### ***How Much Seafood Should You Consume During Pregnancy?***

Leading authorities in health conclude fish should be included in diets during pregnancy.

- Pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women are recommended by the Maternal Nutrition Group to consume a minimum of 12 ounces of seafood per week (salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines), and six ounces of the recommended fish per week can come from albacore tuna. 12 ounces of fish is generally equivalent to the size of 4 decks of cards or 2 cans of fish.
- A recent Institutes of Medicine report, *Seafood Choices: Balancing Benefits and Risks*, concludes that federal agencies should encourage pregnant women or those who may become pregnant, to include seafood in their diets.

### ***Species of Fish To Avoid***

The FDA/EPA advisory recommends that women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant and who are breastfeeding should not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.