

CU Statement on FDA Position on Mercury From Fish Consumption

For Immediate Release

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Consumers Union is deeply disturbed that the Food and Drug Administration is contemplating relaxing its fish-consumption advice for vulnerable populations such as women of child-bearing age, pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants. The agency's recommendation flies in the face of decades of scientific-based concern about the neurological and behavioral effects of mercury from food, especially on the developing nervous systems of fetuses and young children. Our analysis of the agency's own data in 2006 led Consumers Union to recommend that pregnant women avoid tuna altogether.

“Until there is greater scientific understanding of the causes of neurological disorders and diseases including Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Lou Gehrig's Disease, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, we cannot rule out the health effects of exposures to neurotoxins like mercury, especially during critical periods of the neurological system's development and vulnerability to damage that occurs in the womb and into childhood,” said Dr. Urvashi Rangan, Senior Scientist and Policy Analyst at Consumers Union.

With so many types of fish lower in mercury widely available to consumers—such as wild salmon, sardines, scallops or tilapia—Consumers Union finds it irresponsible for the government to deliberately fail to differentiate among better alternatives and suggest that susceptible people should take unnecessary risk.

“This news, in addition to the recent news about FDA's questionable process of evaluating the risks associated with bisphenol-A, and the agency's handling of the melamine crisis, show the desperate need for a comprehensive overhaul of the agency. The agency continues to falter in its responsibility to protect American consumers,” said Rangan.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/babies-kids/child-safety/food/mercury-in-tuna/tuna-safety/overview/0607_tuna_ov.htm

<http://www.greenerchoices.org/products.cfm?product=fishyfi&pcat=food>