

5 smart reasons to Enjoy Nutrient-Rich Fish and Shellfish

Most nutrition experts tell us to eat more fish. This comes from groups like the American Heart Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is almost always better to eat whole fish. Fish and shellfish have more nutrients than refined fish oil supplements! And there are so many to try – from arctic char to whitefish.

1. Omega-3 Fatty Acids

These “good” fats support health in many ways. They help reduce the risk of heart disease and lower blood pressure. They can also help prevent arthritis and promote brain function. Omega-3s are found in every kind of fish, but fatty fish have the most. Good choices include trout, salmon, tuna (canned chunk-light packed in water), sardines, oysters, crab and cod.

2. Protein

Fish has high quality protein. Ounce for ounce, most kinds of fish have about the same amount of protein as lean red meats (beef and pork) and poultry. There are about 20 to 25 grams of protein in 3 ounces of cooked fish. Salmon and tuna are on the high end. They have closer to 25 grams of protein.

3. Vitamin D

Vitamin D is enjoying a moment in the sun! We used to think it was just important for bones. But it is big news now. It seems to affect almost every cell in our bodies. The main sources of vitamin D are fortified dairy foods, sun exposure and supplements. But vitamin D is also found in fatty fish. Good options include salmon, tuna, sardines and mackerel.



4. Other vitamins

Vitamin D is just one of many key vitamins in fish and shellfish. Fish can be an great source of vitamin A. Salmon and tuna are especially good. One serving of tuna has 43 percent of the vitamin A you need in a day. Vitamin E and the B vitamins are also found fish.

5. Many minerals

Eating fish can be a good way to get iodine, selenium, phosphorus and magnesium. Most fish also have calcium, but not much. There is about 100 milligrams or less in 3 ounces of fish. Canned fish is an exception, if you eat the small bones. Canned sardines and salmon have at least 250 milligrams of calcium per serving.

A special note for pregnant women and young children: Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish because they have high levels of mercury. Limit albacore (white) tuna to no more than 6 ounces per week. Canned chunk-light tuna is okay. Check advisories about fish caught by family and friends in local lakes, rivers and coastal areas.