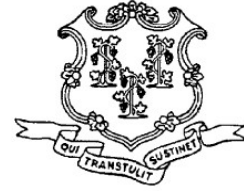


# News



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## **Supermarket Fish Choices: State Health Department, Connecticut Food Association Join Forces to “Sell” Benefits of Making Healthy Fish Choices**

**Hartford** - The Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Food Association announced an expanded effort to reach women consumers to help them decide which species of fish to eat in order to enjoy their healthy benefits, while reducing the risk of ingesting certain chemicals. To better help consumers understand which fish to purchase, signs and “takeaway” cards with advice on the best fish choices are available at food stores at the fish counter. The Connecticut Food Association, representing supermarkets in Connecticut, agreed to voluntarily post signs and cards in all participating stores.

New versions of the sign and takeaway cards are being made available that focus on the best types of fish to eat. These good fish are designated by “hearts.” These include sole, wild salmon, trout, flounder and pollock. A special media event is being held at the Shop-Rite supermarket at the corner of Prospect and Kane Streets in West Hartford on Thursday, November 18, 2010 at 2 pm to showcase the materials.

“As public health practitioners we encourage people to eat more fish for the heart-healthy benefits of omega-3 fatty acids, but we also urge people to limit eating some specific fish species because of the risk of toxins, such as mercury,” stated DPH Commissioner Robert Galvin, M.D. M.P.H., M.B.A. “People should not be afraid to eat fish, but people who consume large amounts of fish on a daily or weekly basis need to understand their risk.”

Seafood is good for people because it contains high levels of protein and nutritious omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to preventing heart disease and are particularly important to pregnant women and women of childbearing years because of their crucial role in brain development of unborn children.

Unfortunately, some fish absorb chemicals such as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). These chemicals can build up in the human body and damage the nervous system. The

developing fetus and young children are most sensitive. Women who eat fish containing these chemicals before or during pregnancy or while they are nursing may have children who are slow to develop and learn. Long-term exposure to PCB's may also increase cancer risk.

“The sign program emphasizes that fish is part of a healthy diet but that women of child bearing age and young children face possible hazards from eating too much of certain species that are contaminated with mercury or PCB's,” stated Stan Sorkin, CFA President. “It is the food industry's responsibility to effectively communicate this information to our consumers.”

Consumers can look at the fish counter to see if your supermarket is participating in this program. You can also get the “*Healthy Fish Choice*” guide and other information on types of fish caught in specific water bodies in Connecticut by visiting the DPH web site at [www.ct.gov/dph/fish](http://www.ct.gov/dph/fish) or call 1-877-458-FISH (3474).

*The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

*The Connecticut Food Association is a cornerstone of the food industry in the Northeast. A non-profit trade association, the Connecticut Food Association represents hundreds of independent grocers, major chains, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, specialty food producers, retail and convenience stores, and other food professionals. To contact the association, please visit its website at <http://www.ctfoodassociation.org/> or call (860) 677-8097.*