

Health Risks associated with farmed salmon consumption

Because farmed salmon are exposed to many chemicals, and because they are one of the fattest fish, they store these chemicals in their body in high concentration. This is why their consumption can be extremely harmful for health.

1. Official recommendations

The Norwegian authorities recommend that **children, teenagers, young women and pregnant women should not eat farmed salmon more than twice a week**. The reason for these recommendations is that farmed salmon accumulates in their fats high amounts of heavy metals (Cadmium, Mercury and Arsenic), Persistent Organic Products (POP) which can be carcinogenic and/or endocrine disruptors (diflubenzuron, PCB, dioxins and other pesticides).

2. Recent researches

Various recent scientific publications show that the quantities of chemicals found in farmed salmon exceeds by far the ones found in all other human food on the market. Exposure to **PCBs** and other **POPs** have been documented to induce significant toxic effects to human development, and through **endocrine disruption**, the causality for **cancer** and metabolic disorders such as **diabetes** are now well understood. Current health advisories on tolerable consumption limits of POPs and **heavy metals** have slowly developed over the last decade, with toxicological evidence urging for these levels to **decrease** particularly for pregnant and nursing women as well as children.

It is also now accepted that **cocktail-effect** (the exposure to various chemicals in the same time) makes most recommendations obsolete. From this point of view, farmed salmon is one of the worst case one can imagine since it combines so many different chemicals.

Most scientists hence agree that the **official recommendations are not protective enough**.

3. Where do these dangerous products come from?

Most pesticides come from the **feed** given to the salmon which is more and more vegetal (mainly GMO-soy). But also feed complement such as **fish oil** made from fishes fished in polluted waters containing high levels of heavy metals. Finally, the **diflubenzuron** used to treat salmon against **sea lice** is absorbed by the fishes and decay it into various metabolites known to be harmful for human health, fertility and children normal development. One should stress that *Marine Harvest*, one of the major salmon farmer, has decided to **clean the fish oils** feed to their salmon. This decision should be generalised to all farms but this would only solve one part of the problem.

4. Are the benefits of Omega3 counterbalancing these effects?

It is very often advocated that the benefits of **Omega-3** for the heart and blood circulation are far more important than the negative effects of the chemicals. It is important to stress that farmed salmon which are feed with soy, usually contain **much less omega-3** than their wild counterparts. So far, no scientific study has ever shown any health benefits from consuming farmed salmon.