

NUTRITION NEWS

Fishing For Answers About Salmon

(NAPSA)—People who scaled back their salmon consumption for fear of PCBs may have been believing a fish tale. That's good news, because salmon is high in omega-3 fatty acids, protein and other nutrients that have been linked to good health.

The latest round of PCB monitoring carried out by Salmon of the Americas (SOTA) shows levels of PCBs in farmed salmon at about the same levels as those from wild Alaska chinook and sockeye salmon. Nutritionists say the news can help put to rest any fears that arose from the notorious Hites study, which proclaimed farmed salmon had higher levels of PCBs than their wild cousins.

What's the Real Risk?

PCBs are polychlorinated biphenyls that were used in manufacturing for almost half a century. When PCBs were found to be toxic in 1979, the United States banned their use. However, scientists point out that there is no scientific evidence showing that PCBs in fish or the environment cause cancer in humans. In fact, workers in industrial settings exposed to PCBs on a daily basis show no higher rates of cancer than the rest of the population.

"This fascination with PCBs in salmon is reminiscent of past food scares," says Doris Adler, cardiac dietitian with Saint Joseph's Hos-



A new study offers good news for salmon fans.

pital in Atlanta, Georgia. "The amount of PCBs ingested through salmon is so insignificant that it's not worth fretting over. In fact, we eat more PCBs from other foods than we do from salmon. It's unfortunate that coverage generated by the Hites study was so misleading that it drove many consumers away from a heart-healthy food."

In addition, mercury, which has been a problem for some other fish, is not a problem in farmed or wild salmon.

Heart Health

According to Eric Rimm, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition at the Harvard

School of Public Health, "The health benefits of the protein and omega-3 fatty acids found in wild salmon or farmed salmon from Canada or Chile—where the U.S. gets most of its salmon—will almost definitely outweigh the risks for American adults where the leading cause of death is from cardiovascular diseases."

Salmon is one of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which have been shown to stave off heart attacks, minimize symptoms of arthritis, help control blood glucose levels and reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's. A recent study found that women who ate fatty fish once a week had a 40 percent lower risk of heart disease than did women who ate fish less than once per month.

"In addition to having three to four times the omega-3's of other fish, farmed salmon is inexpensive and readily available," says Kathleen Zelman, registered dietitian in Marietta, Georgia. "And perhaps best of all for the diet weary, it's easy to prepare and tastes great. Eating more salmon is an excellent means of controlling calories in our weight-conscious society while also providing an array of health benefits. It is literally one of the best ways you can protect your heart, and heart disease is the number-one killer in the United States today."