OCEANS ALERT

RESTAURANTS FOR HEALTHEIR FISH INFORMATION GUIDE

- The FDA is responsible for regulating contaminant levels in all commercially bought or farmed fish; the EPA sets safety standards for recreationally caught fish.
- The FDA's PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyl) standards are approximately 500 times weaker than the limits imposed by the EPA, for instance, where the FDA would recommend consumption 2 times per week for farmed salmon, the EPA would recommend consumption only 1 time per month.
- The FDA has not updated their PCB standards since 1984; the EPA set their standards in 1999.
- The FDA must perform its own testing in order to change regulation levels, but insists testing is not necessary.
- FDA only performs limited testing of fish as part of their Total Diet Study, which measures traces of chemicals in the average diet.
- There are only around 200 FDA inspectors assigned to screen 10 billion pounds of imported and domestic fish annually.
- The Pew Charitable Trust recently performed a study of farmed salmon compared to wild caught salmon. They found that the PCB levels in farmed fish were 5 times higher than the safe EPA standards. The report concluded that farmed salmon should only be consumed *one time* per month.
- PCBs are known carcinogens and negatively affect many of the major systems in the human body.
- The Toxic Substance Control Act bans PCB use, but they still pervade soil and water because of prevalence in the runoff and waste from outdated electrical equipment, where it was used as a flame retardant.
- Fish become poisoned by coming into contact with contaminated water. Bigger fish are more at risk because they consume smaller contaminated fish and inherit their toxins in a process called bioaccumulation.
- Farmed fish have especially high levels of PCBs because they are fed feed of ground up fish and fish oil, and bioaccumulate high levels of PCBs and other contaminants.

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