



MAR 2 2001

Janice Adair  
Director  
Office of Environmental Health  
555 Cordova Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Ms. Adair:

I want to thank you for bringing to my attention your concern about the unintended impact of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) January 12, 2001 fish consumption advisory, targeted to pregnant women and women of childbearing age, on Alaskan consumers, including native subsistence fishermen. You have correctly pointed out that salmon, both fresh and canned, have very low if any contamination from methyl mercury as evidenced by FDA surveillance data. You have also correctly pointed out that, for many Alaskan consumers, salmon may be the only protein source available. Accordingly, in reviewing the January advisory, and in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and Alaskan officials, we propose modifying our fish consumption advisory on methylmercury to provide for increased consumption in Alaska of salmon and canned salmon. The proposed revised advisory is presented below:

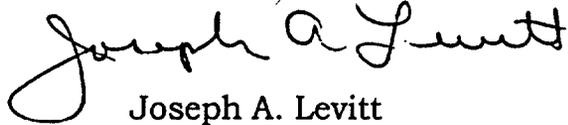
“WHAT IF I EAT MORE THAN 12 OUNCES OF FISH A WEEK?”

There is no harm in eating more than 12 ounces of fish in one week as long as you don't do it on a regular basis. One week's consumption does not change the level of methylmercury in the body much at all. If you eat a lot of fish one week, you can cut back the next week or two and be just fine. Just make sure you average 12 ounces of fish a week.

Some kinds of fish are known to have much lower than average levels of methylmercury and can be safely eaten more frequently and in larger amounts. Contact your federal, state or local health department or other appropriate food safety authority for specific consumption recommendations about fish caught or sold in your local area.”

Please let me know in writing if you concur with this revised advisory. Upon your concurrence, we will re-issue the revised consumer advisory and use the updated version in our consumer education materials and program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph A. Levitt". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Joseph A. Levitt  
Director  
Center for Food Safety  
and Applied Nutrition