

New online tool allows consumers to assess the health benefits and risks of seafood

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FishChoice, a new online tool to help consumers and professionals efficiently and effectively balance the benefits and risks of eating seafood, has been launched by the EU-funded ECsafeSEAFOOD project at www.fishchoice.eu.

Seafood plays an important role in a balanced diet. It is a nutrient-rich food that is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals and contains a unique type of fat - namely omega-3 [fatty acids](#), which have considerable health benefits. Like any other food type, [seafood](#) can also be a source of harmful contaminants with the potential to impact human health negatively.

The ECsafeSEAFOOD project ran from February 2013 until January 2017 and assessed food safety issues related to priority contaminants present in seafood as a result of environmental contamination. One of the most important objectives of the project was to assess the [health risks](#) associated with the intake of [chemical contaminants](#), such as inorganic arsenic and methylmercury, through the consumption of seafood. In this framework, a new interactive tool called FishChoice was designed, developed and validated. FishChoice provides users with the means to minimise their exposure to chemical pollutants from eating seafood, whilst helping them ensure important nutrients, such as fatty acids, are still consumed.

FishChoice is a digital tool which assists users by taking both the benefits and risks into consideration when choosing seafood. Two

versions of the tool have been designed, one for everyday users and one for professionals working in the field of nutrition and health. Both versions are freely available at the website www.fishchoice.eu. The tool allows the user to create a weekly menu by selecting among 24 of the most consumed [seafood species](#) in Europe. The benefits and risks for each choice are then calculated by comparison with threshold values. What makes this program particularly unique is the inclusion of specific information for pregnant women and nursing mothers, whose increased health risk from consuming certain species such as tuna, was incorporated into the system. FishChoice is currently available in five languages (English, Dutch, Norwegian, Portuguese and Spanish), and others will be added shortly.

More information: Lolita Vilavert et al. Health risk/benefit information for consumers of fish and shellfish: FishChoice, a new online tool, *Food and Chemical Toxicology* (2017). DOI: [10.1016/j.fct.2017.02.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fct.2017.02.004)

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