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## Flyer Encourages Pregnant Women to Eat Fish



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October 6, 2008 - A new consumer nutrition education flyer created by a task force of food and health organizations encourages the importance of seafood consumption for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

The flyer, targeted at retailers and nutrition educators, debuted yesterday at the Food Marketing Institute's 2008 Consumer Affairs Seminar in Boston, which concludes Tuesday. The information is consistent with federal government advice and several new studies that suggest women should eat two to three meals of a variety of fish weekly to set their babies up for optimal health.



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"Despite multiple and large research studies that clearly show the benefits of eating fish during pregnancy, pregnant women in the U.S. are still eating less than 2 ounces of seafood a week," says Jennifer Wilmes, a registered dietitian with the National Fisheries Institute. "So we have to be thoughtful about the messages we are giving them."

The Seafood and Pregnancy Taskforce includes NFI, FMI, the International Food Information Council Foundation and the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. The flyer combines guidance from the Institute of Medicine and the Food and Drug Administration as well as the latest independent seafood science.

The flyer comes out just weeks after Harvard Medical School published a landmark study of over 25,000 mothers and babies that found eating plenty of fish during pregnancy leads to better child development.

"We're excited to offer a flyer that gives moms-to-be and breastfeeding moms balanced information and accurate guidance so they can make healthful eating choices during pregnancy," says Wilmes. "Our research shows that after reading the new flyer, women are encouraged to eat a variety of fish a few times per week, while they're still aware that there are four fish to avoid."

In a 2004 joint advisory with the Environmental Protection Agency, the FDA warned women of childbearing age, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers to avoid eating seafood with high methylmercury levels, including swordfish, shark, tilefish and king mackerel, while limiting their consumption of albacore, or white, tuna.

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