

**ICFA**International Coalition of
Fisheries Associations

The Health Benefits of Eating Seafood

What the latest science tells us

Seafood has long had a reputation for being a healthy food. Many studies into the health benefits of seafood exist, but it can be hard for the general public to access.

This is why the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) commissioned two expert scientists to review the latest science. At the start of 2025, Wendy Hunt (Murdoch University) and Alexandra McManus (Curtin University and University of Notre Dame Australia) conducted a detailed review of the scientific literature around seafood and human nutrition, analysing 281 studies.

This study was totally independent. ICFA had no influence over the study results or recommendations.



Find the Hunt and
McManus review here

Some of the many benefits found in the studies they reviewed are summarised below:



Cardiovascular (heart) health

- Two servings of seafood per week reduces the risk of cardiovascular events by 10%, and one serving a day reduces risks by 30%.
- Getting a type of omega-3 in seafood called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) in your diet improves your heart and cardiovascular (circulatory) function.



Cognitive (mental) benefits

- Eating two servings of fish a week helps protect against developing all-cause dementia by 10% and Alzheimer's by 30%.



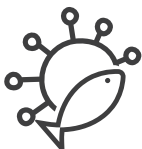
Mental health

- Eating four or more servings of fish weekly as an adult (compared to less than one serving per week) can lower your risk of depression by 26%, especially for women.
- Eating more oily fish can improve sleep quality.



Maternal and child health

- Getting omega-3s through seafood during pregnancy can reduce the chances of a pre-term birth and the chance of baby being low birthweight.
- For men, getting omega-3s in their diet may increase sperm count, concentration and motility (how well their sperm can "swim").



Cancer risk reduction

- Eating non-fried fish with omega-3s is associated with a reduced risk for several types of cancer, including: breast cancer, colorectal cancer, gastrointestinal cancer, uterine cancer, liver cancer, oesophageal and head/neck cancer, and pancreatic cancer.



Healthy ageing

- For older women, eating five or more servings of oily fish each week reduces the occurrence of osteoporosis and loss of bone density (osteopenia).
- Eating higher amounts of oily fish can also prevent general frailty in older adults.

Disclaimer: Dietary guidelines vary by location, so it's always important to refer to recommendations from your local health authority. The nutrients found in seafood vary based on species, the environment where it was caught and cooking method – frying food is not recommended for maximum nutritional benefit. The scientific evidence reviewed by Hunt and McManus supports eating at least two servings a week of seafood, one of them oily, as part of a healthy diet. For information about the studies cited, visit bit.ly/seafood-nutrition

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Key research findings

What science tells us about seafood and nutrition

After reviewing ten years of relevant and high-quality scientific studies, Hunt and McManus concluded that:

- The evidence supports the consumption of at least two serves of seafood per week (a serve equals 100–150 grams) as part of a healthy diet
- At least one of these portions should be rich in omega-3 fatty acids
- A variety of seafood should be consumed to gain optimal health benefits
- There are health benefits at all stages of life
- Consuming supplements containing some of the nutrients from seafood can be beneficial, however eating seafood itself offers additional benefits because of the range of nutrition in whole fish and shellfish

About the literature review process

Hunt and McManus used four academic search engines to source peer-reviewed studies about seafood's impact on health. Their search turned up nearly 9,000 articles. But scientific articles are not equally credible, so Hunt and McManus sorted them by how well-designed the studies were and how strong their evidence was. In the end, they evaluated 281 studies in their review, chosen because they had well-designed and reliable studies and moderate-to-high levels of evidence – meaning we can trust the results are accurate and proven.

“Seafood and fish are sources of complete protein, are rich in essential amino acids and also contain many bioavailable nutrients including Vitamins A, B and D as well as the minerals iodine, selenium, zinc, calcium, phosphorous, iron, copper, manganese, and taurine.”

For full detail see: Hunt W, McManus A. 2025 The health benefits of eating seafood: Evidence based science. School of Medical, Molecular and Forensic Sciences, Murdoch University, Australia and Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin University, Australia. Report # 27032025



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