

Seafood: The Protein with Benefits

Seafood is an animal protein with benefits.

When nutrition researchers link certain foods to better health outcomes, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and *seafood* come out on top. This chart is a summary of *Table D2.3* that appears in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Committee Report¹ and shows how seafood is linked to better health:

Health Outcome	Description of the Dietary Pattern Associated with Beneficial Health Outcomes
Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease	Higher consumption of <i>vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and seafood</i>
Reduced risk of obesity	Higher in <i>vegetables, fruits, and whole grains</i> ; include <i>seafood and legumes</i>
Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes	Higher in <i>vegetables, fruits, and whole grains</i>
Reduced risk of cancer	Colon/Rectal Cancer: Higher in <i>vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, lean meats/seafood, and low-fat dairy</i> and moderate in <i>alcohol</i> Lung Cancer: More frequent servings of <i>vegetables, fruits, seafood, grains/cereals, and legumes, and lean versus higher fat meats and lower fat or non-fat dairy products</i>
Reduced risk of congenital anomalies	Neural tube defects: Dietary patterns during the preconception period that are higher in <i>vegetables, fruits, and grains</i>
Reduced risk of neurological and psychological illnesses	Age-related cognitive impairment, dementia, and/or Alzheimer's disease: Regularly eating an array of <i>vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes and seafood</i> Depression: Emphasizing <i>seafood, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and legumes</i>
Bone health	Adults: Higher in <i>vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and dairy products</i>

Seafood contains vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids which are linked to lower risk of many diseases. Just one serving of salmon provides 100% of the daily recommended amount of vitamin D. Salmon has one of the highest amounts of omega-3 per serving at 700-900 mg per 4-ounce serving.

Even though salmon and other seafood are rich in omega-3, they are still considered a **lean protein when compared to other lean animal proteins**. A 4-ounce serving of canned salmon has only 4 grams of total fat and a whopping 20 grams of protein.

Eating seafood two to three times per week reduces the risk of death from any health-related cause by 17%.² (Now read that statement again!)

What about mercury?

Salmon and other seafood are excellent sources of selenium, a mineral that has powerful antioxidant properties. A serving of salmon provides 63% of the recommended daily allowance. And that's important because, while salmon is not a seafood high in mercury, **getting enough selenium can help counter the effects of mercury found elsewhere in the food supply**. According to researchers,³ the selenium in seafood offsets any concerns about mercury content. **The real risk is not getting enough seafood.**

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2015. Washington, DC. Table D2.3 <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/07-chapter-2/d2-6.asp>

²Mozaffarian D, Rimm EB. Fish intake, contaminants, and human health: evaluating the risks and the benefits. *JAMA*. 2006;296:1885-99.

³Nick Ralston and scientists at the University of North Dakota's Energy and Environmental Research Center <http://www.seafood-source.com/news/food-safety-health/q-a-nick-ralston-university-of-north-dakota>

⁴U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.



Protein With Benefits *continued*

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines⁴ recommend eating at least two servings of a variety of seafood every week. Here are protein-packed ways to eat according to the Dietary Guidelines:

- **Breakfast:** 2-ounces smoked salmon, whole wheat bagel thin, 1 ounce reduced-fat cream cheese = 22 grams PROTEIN
- **Lunch:** 3 ounces canned pink salmon served over 1 cup brown rice with a variety of vegetables and low-sodium soy sauce = 21 grams PROTEIN
- **Dinner:** 4-ounce salmon fillet with tomato sauce and 1 cup whole wheat pasta = 32 grams PROTEIN
- **Snack:** 1 pouch flavored pink salmon, 6 whole grain crackers, cucumber slices = 16 grams PROTEIN

Salmon and Vegetable Quesadillas

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 (2.5 ounce) Chicken of the Sea® Sweet & Spicy Salmon pouches, flaked
- 1 large portobello mushroom
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 small summer squash, diced
- 1 small zucchini, diced
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- 4 whole grain tortillas
- 2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 4 ounces goat cheese

TOTAL TIME:
15 MINUTES

SERVINGS:
4

NUTRITION:

Calories 550
Fat 33g
Protein 33g
Carbs 30g
Sodium 1070mg
Sugar 9g



Recipe provided by Chicken of the Sea®

Directions:

1. In a 10 or 12-inch skillet, add the olive oil and sauté the vegetables over medium until softened. Once vegetables are cooked, transfer to a plate.
2. Add a tortilla to the skillet and heat. Add 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese on top of the tortilla, then 1/2 of the vegetables and 1 pouch of salmon on top of the cheese.
3. Once the mozzarella cheese begins to melt, add 2 ounces goat cheese and cover with a second tortilla.
4. Cook until slightly crisp then flip to toast the other side.
5. Repeat the above with the remaining ingredients.
6. Let the quesadillas cool slightly and cut into halves or quarters. Serve with your favorite condiments, like sour cream, salsa or guacamole.

