

**PSR**<sup>®</sup> Physicians for  
Social  
Responsibility

# Mercury Campaign 2004



**Susan West Marmagas, MPH**  
**February 1, 2005**

# Mercury Pollution

- **December 2003: Bush Administration introduces weak mercury reduction proposal for power plants**



# PSR's Goals

- **Increase public awareness and opposition to Bush proposal**
- **Make health effects of mercury a key element of the debate**
- **Increase PSR's visibility and activist network**

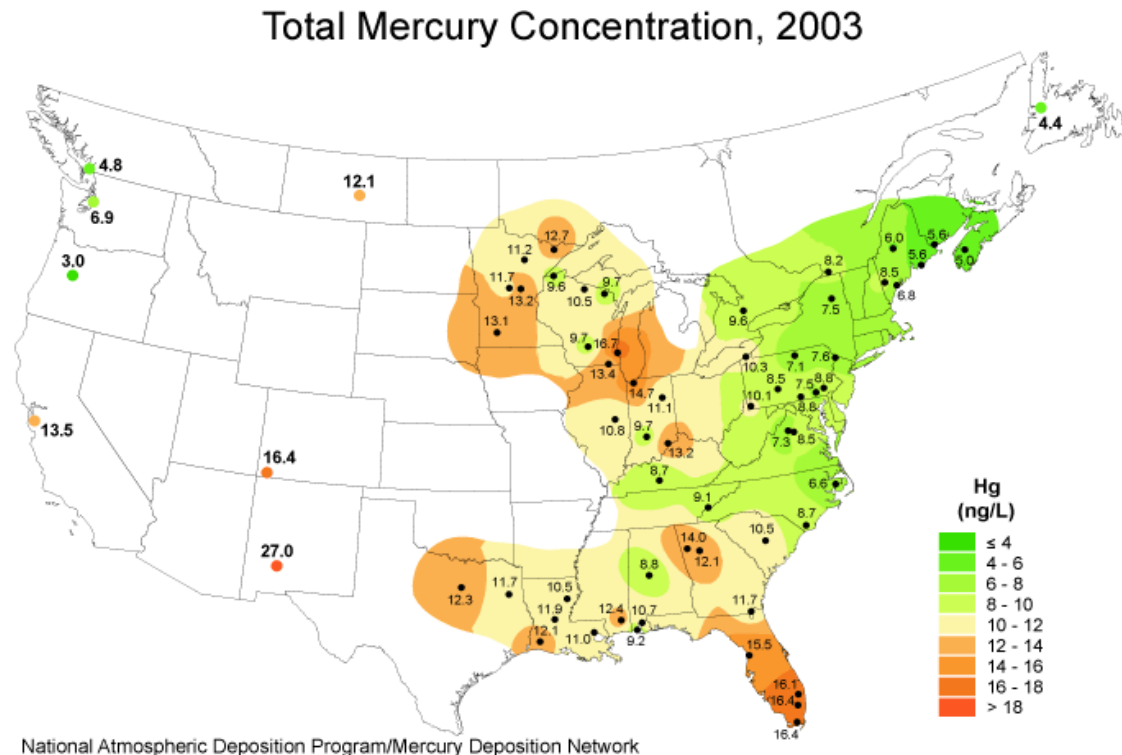
# Identifying Winning Messages

- **Mercury is a health threat to women and children**
- **Health professionals are most credible messengers**
- **Direct and Indirect messages:**
  - Direct: Tying pollution to health effects and Bush Administration's policies
  - Indirect: How women and children can avoid mercury contamination from fish consumption

# Targeting

- **Focused on states with significant mercury problem**

- Upper Midwest
- New England
- Florida



# Creating/Seizing Opportunities



## Environment and Health Program



January 29, 2004  
For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Nadia Khatchadourian,  
202-478-6187 or  
Daniel J. Weiss,  
202-478-6307

## **New Mercury Rule Fails to Protect Kids, Say EPA's Own Child Health Advisors**

**Letter to Administrator Leavitt Urges Tougher Standards for Power Plants**

# Creating/Seizing Opportunities

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2004 - VOL. CCXLIII NO. 21 - ★★ ★★ \$1.00

### *EPA Is Warned of Mercury 'Hot Spots' in New Rules*



The EPA said the proposals would reduce mercury emissions by 70% by 2018. But a provision allowing companies to "bank" emissions credits might extend the phase-in for an additional five years, said panel member Susan West Marra-gas of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a Washington health-advocacy group.

# Other PSR Press Stories

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®

The Star-Ledger

**AP** Associated Press



# Letters to the Editor

## The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIALS/LETTERS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2004

### The Mercury Threat: Too Dangerous to Wait

To the Editor:

Re "Questions About a Market System for Mercury" (news article, Feb. 24): The danger from mercury "hot spots" is a primary reason that the Environmental Protection Agency's own Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee raised concerns about the E.P.A.'s mercury proposal.

The committee urged Michael O. Leavitt, the E.P.A. administrator, to strengthen the proposal because it "does not sufficiently protect our nation's children." I am a member of the committee, which includes doc-

tors and health experts from academia, government and industry.

Mercury's harm to fetal and child development is well documented. It is alarming that the E.P.A. is delaying significant mercury reduction until 2018 or later. The technology and means exist to promptly reduce mercury's threat to our children. The E.P.A. should replace its proposal with one adequate to protect them.

SUSAN WEST MARMAGAS

Washington, Feb. 24, 2004

The writer is director of environment and health programs, Physicians for Social Responsibility.

# Getting New Data to Reporters

- **PSR calls reporters to alert them to new analysis showing 630,000 newborns at risk every year**
- **Becomes widely used as “standard” figure in media reports**

# Field Hearings Winter 2004

- **EPA Public Hearings on February 25 in IL, NC, PA**

**Strategy: Generate favorable coverage, and include PSR Doctors where possible**

- Local PSR Docs Speak at Press Events, Hearings
- Publish Op-ed in Raleigh News-Observer
- Featured op-ed in Chicago Tribune
- Generate Favorable Editorial in Philadelphia Inquirer

# Chicago Tribune Op-Ed



FEBRUARY 27, 2004 FRIDAY

SECTION 1 CHICAGO TRIBUNE

COMMENTARY

## Are the EPA's mercury claims legit?

# Magazine Tour

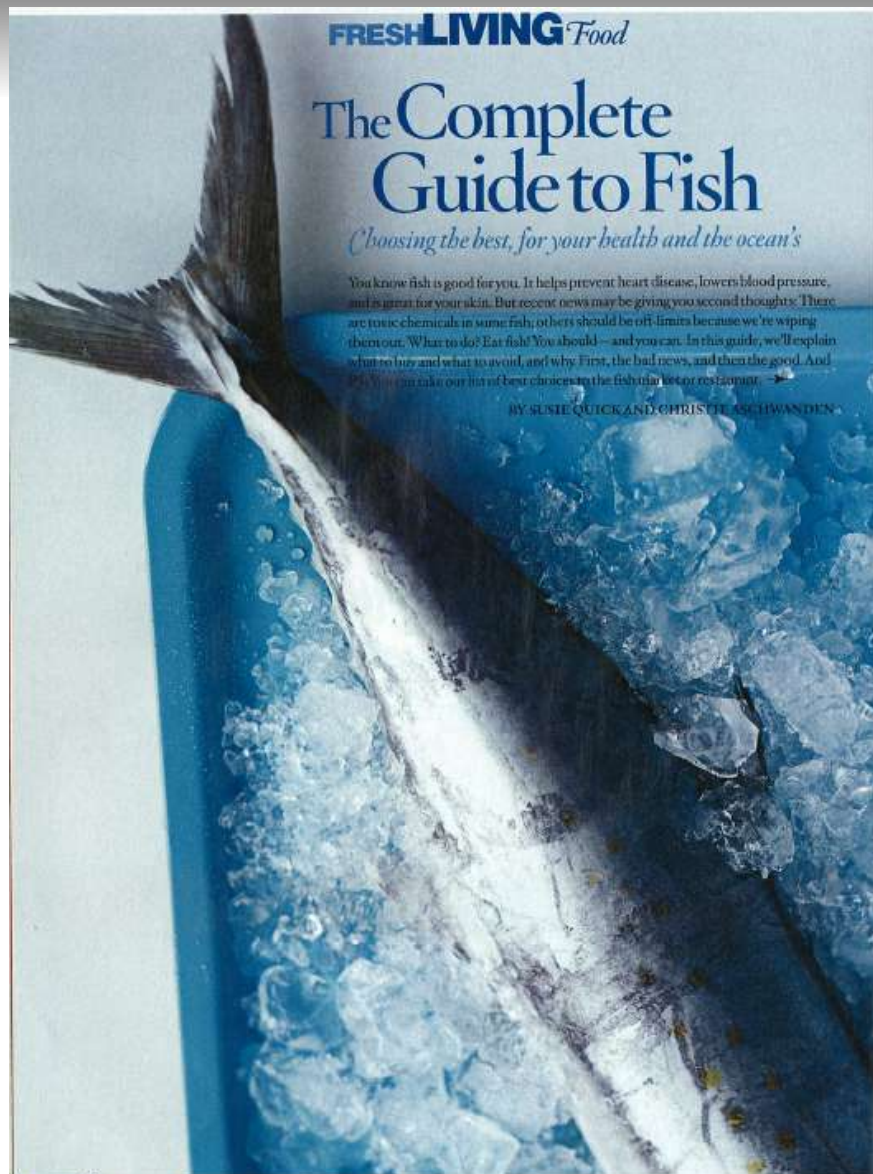
- **Visits to Women's Magazines in NYC**
- **Focus on indirect message of family safety**



# Magazine Tour



# Magazine Tour



FRESH LIVING Food

## The Complete Guide to Fish

*Choosing the best, for your health and the ocean's*

You know fish is good for you. It helps prevent heart disease, lowers blood pressure, and is great for your skin. But recent news may be giving you second thoughts: There are toxic chemicals in some fish; others should be off-limits because we're wiping them out. What to do? Eat fish? You should—and you can. In this guide, we'll explain what to buy and what to avoid, and why. First, the bad news, and then the good. And then we'll take our list of best choices to the fish store or restaurant. →

BY RUSIE QUICK AND CHRISTIE SCHWANEN

## The OS Seafood Shopping List

Take this list with you to markets and restaurants. It will help you steer clear of toxins and species that are in jeopardy of being overfished.

YES FISH	SOMETIMES FISH	NO FISH
<p>Eat a variety of these fish up to twice a week. They have few or no toxins and are caught in ways that don't hurt the environment.</p> <p>Bass, striped (farmed)            Catfish (U.S. farmed)            Caviar (from farmed sturgeon and rainbow trout)            Clams (farmed)            Crab, Dungeness            Crawfish (U.S. farmed)            Lobster, rock (Australia) or spiny (California)            Mussels (farmed)            Oysters (farmed)            Salmon, wild Alaskan (fresh, smoked, or canned)            Scallops, sea (diver-caught)            Shrimp, northern pink; and spot prawns (U.S. and Canada)            Shrimp, warm-water (U.S. farmed)            Tilapia (U.S. farmed)            Trout, brook and rainbow (farmed)</p>	<p>Limit your consumption of these fish to once or twice a month (except where noted). Sensitive populations, such as young children and pregnant women, may choose to eat less.</p> <p>Bass, striped (wild) M, P            Bluefish M, P            Cod (Pacific), once weekly            Crab, blue (from Mid-Atlantic to Gulf of Mexico) M, P            Crab, snow (U.S.), once weekly            Flounder (Pacific), once weekly            Fluke (Atlantic summer) P            Haddock BC            Halibut (Pacific), once weekly M            Lobster (American/Maine), once weekly            Mackerel, Spanish M            Mahimahi, once weekly            Mussels, blue (wild) HD, P            Oysters (wild, Eastern U.S.) HD, P            Pollock (also used in imitation crab, fish sticks)            Sablefish (also called black cod)            Sardines P            Scallops, bay (imported, farmed)*            Scallops, sea (U.S. dredged) BC, HD            Shrimp/prawns (wild, U.S.), once weekly            Sole (Pacific) HD            Tuna, albacore, bigeye, yellowfin (troll- and pole-caught) M            Tuna, canned (albacore) M            Tuna, canned (chunk light), once weekly M</p>	<p>Avoid these fish. They have moderate to high levels of toxins and/or are overfished, caught, or farmed in ways that hurt the environment. Women who are pregnant and nursing or planning a pregnancy, and children should not eat shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel.</p> <p>Caviar (beluga, ostrya, sevruga) OF            Cod (Atlantic/Icelandic) OF, M            Crab, blue (Chesapeake Bay) HD, OF, M, P            Crab, king (imported) OF            Flounder (Atlantic) BC, HD, OF            Grouper OF, M            Halibut (Atlantic) HD, OF, M            Mackerel, king OF, M            Marlin BC, M            Monkfish BC, HD, OF, M            Orange roughy BC, OF, M            Oysters, Gulf Coast M            Salmon (Atlantic; farmed) HD, P            Sea bass, Chilean (also called Patagonian or Antarctic toothfish) BC, OF, M            Shark BC, OF, M            Shrimp (imported, farmed, or wild) BC, HD            Snapper (U.S.) BC, OF, M            Sole (Atlantic) BC, HD, OF            Swordfish (Atlantic) BC, OF, M            Tilefish (also called golden bass or golden snapper) OF, M            Tuna, bluefin BC, OF, M</p>
<p><b>Legend</b></p> <p>BC - Bycatch            HD - Habitat damage            OF - Overfished            M - Mercury            P - PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and pesticides</p>		<p>* Little is known about the environmental impact of this industry.</p>



# Magazine Tour



## real life health

(EPA). The formula is designed to help states offer advisories to recreational fishers, who tend to eat fish from one body of water. The EPA's model doesn't apply to the general population, but the authors used it to give advice to the general population.

"The model is a risk model, it doesn't say anything about benefits," says James F. Pendergast, chief of the health protection and modeling branch at the EPA. Salmon is high in protein, low in saturated fat and high in omega-3 fatty acids. The FDA is concerned that people will forgo salmon for less healthy foods, like red meat or fast foods, increasing known risks to avoid a potential risk. "I don't think the levels of PCBs in farmed salmon present any type of hazard, and I would not change my eating habits," says Michael A. Gallo, Ph.D., professor of toxicology and public health at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey.

Foran counters: "What I can tell you is you can eat wild salmon and get the same heart-healthy fat benefit and much lower exposure to the contaminants."

The one point everyone agrees on is that the fish farming industry needs to reduce contaminants in its fish meal and fish oil.

### WHAT TO EAT?

- Eat wild salmon if you can find it and afford it.
- If it's not available, eat farmed salmon. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), a public health advocacy group, recommends that women of child-bearing age and girls limit farmed salmon to one meal per month. If you eat fish several times a week, choose other types that are less likely to have PCBs, particularly less fatty fish or seafood, like shrimp, scallops, trout, cod and haddock.
- If you're pregnant or lactating, some experts recommend sticking with wild salmon or other types of fish.
- When preparing fish, remove the skin and trim away dark fat, where contaminants reside.
- Grill or broil fish so the fat drips off, rather than sautéing.

### MERCURY IN THE LUNCH BOX

Tuna is the second most popular seafood (after shrimp). But there are good reasons to be extremely cautious about what kind of tuna you eat.

Mercury, which is found in fresh tuna, is a potent neurotoxin that at low exposures can cause neurological and developmental impairment to a developing fetus, infants and young children. The EPA estimates that roughly one in six babies born in America have high levels of mercury in their blood and could be at risk of

delayed motor and developmental skills as well as problems with attention and memory.

The FDA and EPA released a joint fish advisory for women last March saying that women planning to become pregnant, women who are pregnant and very young children should avoid eating any shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish. The advisory was momentous because the EPA and FDA often offer conflicting advice.

They also advised against eating more than six ounces per week (one serving) of canned albacore (white) tuna, which is higher in mercury than canned light tuna. PSR went a step further and added grouper, orange roughy and mahi-mahi to a moderate-risk group it created. "These fish are shown to have similar levels of mercury in them as albacore," says Susan West Marmagas, director of Environment and Health Programs for the organization.

For fish lower in mercury, the FDA-EPA advisory recommends eating up to 12 ounces a week (two servings). These include shrimp, canned light tuna, haddock, pollock, cod and catfish.

The advisory stated that small children should follow the same advice, but with smaller portions, though the agencies didn't say how much smaller. "The agencies really drop the ball in their advice for children," says Gina Solomon, M.D., senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council in San Francisco. Another group the advisory doesn't address are high-end fish eaters—people who eat fish three or four times a week, largely to control heart disease. They need a limit to avoid acute mercury poisoning, which affects the nervous system and memory, says Halloran. In addition, there's some evidence that mercury may promote the buildup of plaque, promoting heart disease in men.

### WHAT TO EAT?

- At a minimum, follow the fish advisory. (For a list of mercury levels in various fish, go to the FDA web page: [cfsan.fda.gov/~lri/sea-mehg.html](http://cfsan.fda.gov/~lri/sea-mehg.html).)
- To be even safer, PSR recommends that children not eat any canned albacore tuna; with its lower mercury level, canned light tuna is a safer alternative.
- Tuna steaks and sushi should be eaten prudently—no more than once a week.
- PSR recommends children eat no more than two servings a week of low-mercury fish: cod, catfish, shrimp, pollock.
- Mix up the types of fish and shellfish you eat and do not eat the same type more than once a week. If you eat fish three or four times a week, choose only fish that's low in mercury.



# March 16 National News Conference

- **Featured Carol Browner, former Administrator, EPA; American Nurses Association, National Council of Churches**
- **Unveiled widespread opposition including labor**
- **Coincides with local events**

# Groups That Participated in March 16 Events

**ACPM**

American College of  
Preventive Medicine



**AMERICAN NURSES  
ASSOCIATION**



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



# Cities Where PSR Held Mercury Events

- **Atlanta**
- **Austin**
- **Cincinnati**
- **Cleveland**
- **Los Angeles**
- **Miami**
- **Portland**
- **San Francisco**
- **Seattle**

# April 28<sup>th</sup> EPA Conference on Mercury in Tampa, FL



# Mothers Day Event at White House May 2004



PSR Nurse Robyn Gilden Speaks at Mercury Rally

# *Healthy Fish, Healthy Families*

- **Physicians Guide To advise patients on avoidance of mercury contamination, published in June 2004.**
- ***Healthy Fish* is a Consumer Guide to protect women of childbearing age and children**
- **Lets women know which fish are safe to eat and which to avoid**
- **Includes wallet card with fish safety information**



# Healthy Fish, Healthy Families

Clip this wallet card, fold it twice, where indicated, and consult it when grocery shopping or dining out.

PSR Guide to Healthy Fish				
Enjoy up to 2 servings each week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*? Clams <span style="float: right;">LOWEST MERCURY LEVELS</span></li> <li>? Oysters</li> <li>? Shrimp</li> <li>Tilapia <span style="float: right;"><i>Remember to check local and state fish advisories.</i></span></li> <li>Crawfish</li> <li>Haddock</li> <li>Trout (freshwater)</li> <li>Catfish</li> <li>Flatfish (includes flounder and sole)</li> <li>Mackerel (Atlantic)</li> <li>Scallops</li> <li>Crab (Blue, King, and Snow)</li> <li>Pollock</li> <li>Shad (American)</li> <li>Squid <span style="float: right;">FOLD</span></li> <li>Tuna (canned chunk light)</li> <li>Lobster (spiny)</li> <li>Mackerel Chub (Pacific)</li> <li>* Cod</li> <li>Perch (Freshwater)</li> <li>Skate</li> <li>Halibut</li> <li>Mackerel – Spanish (S. Atlantic)</li> <li>* Monkfish</li> <li>* Snapper</li> <li>Weakfish (Sea Trout)</li> <li>Bass (saltwater; includes sea bass/striped bass/rockfish)</li> </ul>			
	1 serving a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobster (Northern/American)</li> <li>Tuna (canned, white albacore)</li> <li>Tuna (fresh/frozen) <span style="float: right;">FOLD</span></li> <li>Mackerel-Spanish (Gulf of Mexico)</li> <li>Marlin</li> <li>* Orange Roughy <span style="float: right;"><i>For more information, visit <a href="http://www.envirohealthaction.org">www.envirohealthaction.org</a>.</i></span></li> <li>* Grouper</li> </ul>		
		1-2 servings a month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Salmon (fresh/frozen)</li> <li>* Sardines</li> <li>* Herring</li> <li>* Bluefish</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;">FATTY FISH</div>	
			Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mackerel – King (Atlantic &amp; Gulf of Mexico)</li> <li>* Shark</li> <li>* Swordfish</li> <li>* Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico) <span style="float: right;">HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS</span></li> </ul>

**KEY**

- \* contain PCBs or other pollutants
- ? rarely tested for mercury
- \* overfished



# Luncheon News Conferences

- Unveil *HF, HF* to press at Prominent Restaurants in June and August 2004
- Washington, New York, Tampa, Pittsburgh
- Targeting food, health, consumer, environmental, and political reporters



# Luncheon News Conferences



Restaurant Nora, Washington, DC  
June 18, 2004

# Luncheon News Conferences



News media film “safe” and “unsafe” fish at the PSR NYC Luncheon event

# Luncheon News Conferences



Video from Pittsburgh event coverage on  
WTAE-TV – [Click to see](#)

# Video News Release

**In conjunction with release of *HF, HF*  
Video News Release Generated:**

**162 local TV stories**

**10.5 Million viewers**

**Stories in major markets including  
Los Angeles, Minneapolis,  
Chicago, Philadelphia, and  
Washington DC**



# Video News Release



**DEL WALTERS:** Also on the health front tonight, you've heard the studies that because of mercury levels, too much fish, they say, can be bad for you.



**KELLY SWOOPE:** From the crabs to the fish-lined counters, the selection is plentiful at Faidley's Seafood Market.



But how do you know which fish are good for you and which ones are not?



**SUSAN MARMAGAS:** Wild fish are very nutritious. We also know that they have varied levels of contaminants that interfere with healthy child development and can also harm adults as well.



**KELLY:** A new consumer guide helps you sort through the school. Best choices for low mercury fish



include the following: trout, lobster, canned chunk light tuna, crab, blue king or snow, tilapia, crawfish, catfish, scallops and shrimp.



The fish to avoid include: mackerel-king, shark, swordfish and tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico.

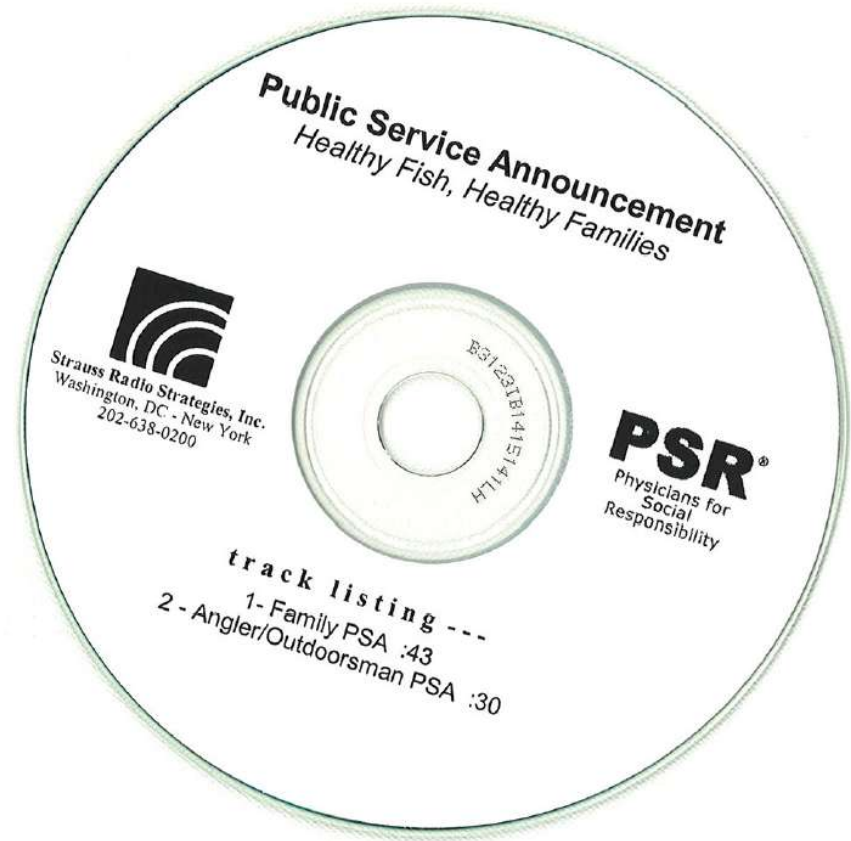
WMAR-TV Baltimore Ch. 2  
ABC News at Five 6-18-04

# Radio PSA

1.1 Million  
Listeners in 30  
major markets



Click to Listen





# Events Designed to Drive Traffic to MercuryAction.org/fish

MercuryActionNOW, sponsored by PSR  
Our kids are too important.

[Home](#) :: [New Resources](#) :: [For Media](#) :: [For Providers](#) :: [Background](#) :: [Research](#) :: [The Campaign](#) :: [About PSR](#)

## Healthy Fish, Healthy Families

*How you can enjoy  
the benefits of seafood,  
while making smart choices  
to lower the risks of pollution*



### TAKE ACTION ONLINE!

» [Reduce Mercury Emissions: Submit a Public Comment to the EPA Docket](#)



### DOWNLOAD

» [Healthy Fish, Healthy Families Pocket Guide](#)  
» [Healthy Fish, Healthy Families Brochure](#)



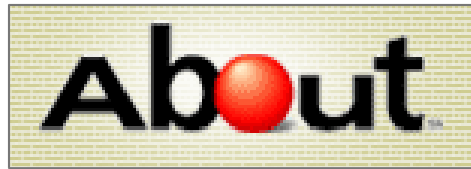
### Are you a healthcare provider?

» [Download the provider's guide](#)

**FISH and other SEAFOOD** can play an important role in a good diet. Because fish are high in protein but low in unhealthy fats, they make a great alternative to red meat. Fish are a good source of vitamins and minerals. They also contain nutrients called



# Donated Advertising Space for HF, HF





# Online Earned Media

Address: <http://health.discovery.com/news/healthscout/article.jsp?aid=519978>

Discovery Health

Discovery Channel TLC Animal Planet Travel Channel Discovery Health Discovery Store

discoveryhealth.com Site Index

July 14, 2004

Discovery Health News

News Brief

< back to: Discovery Health News

Send to a friend

### New Dish on Fish

Jul 14 2004

WEDNESDAY, July 14 (HealthDayNews) -- Two new guides about safe fish consumption have been released by the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP).

The guides, one written for doctors and the other for consumers, are more comprehensive and cautious than fish consumption guidelines recently announced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The new guides recommend children and women of childbearing age avoid fish that have the highest levels of mercury and PCBs.

"Millions of American women and their children are at risk from mercury and PCB contamination from fish and other sources,"

Advertisement

Drink Propel Fitness Water

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**AP** Associated Press



Anthem

child.com

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Supermarket GURU Home

YAHOO! Health

Health monitor®

The Salt Lake Tribune

M&R STRATEGIC SERVICES

# Guerilla Marketing

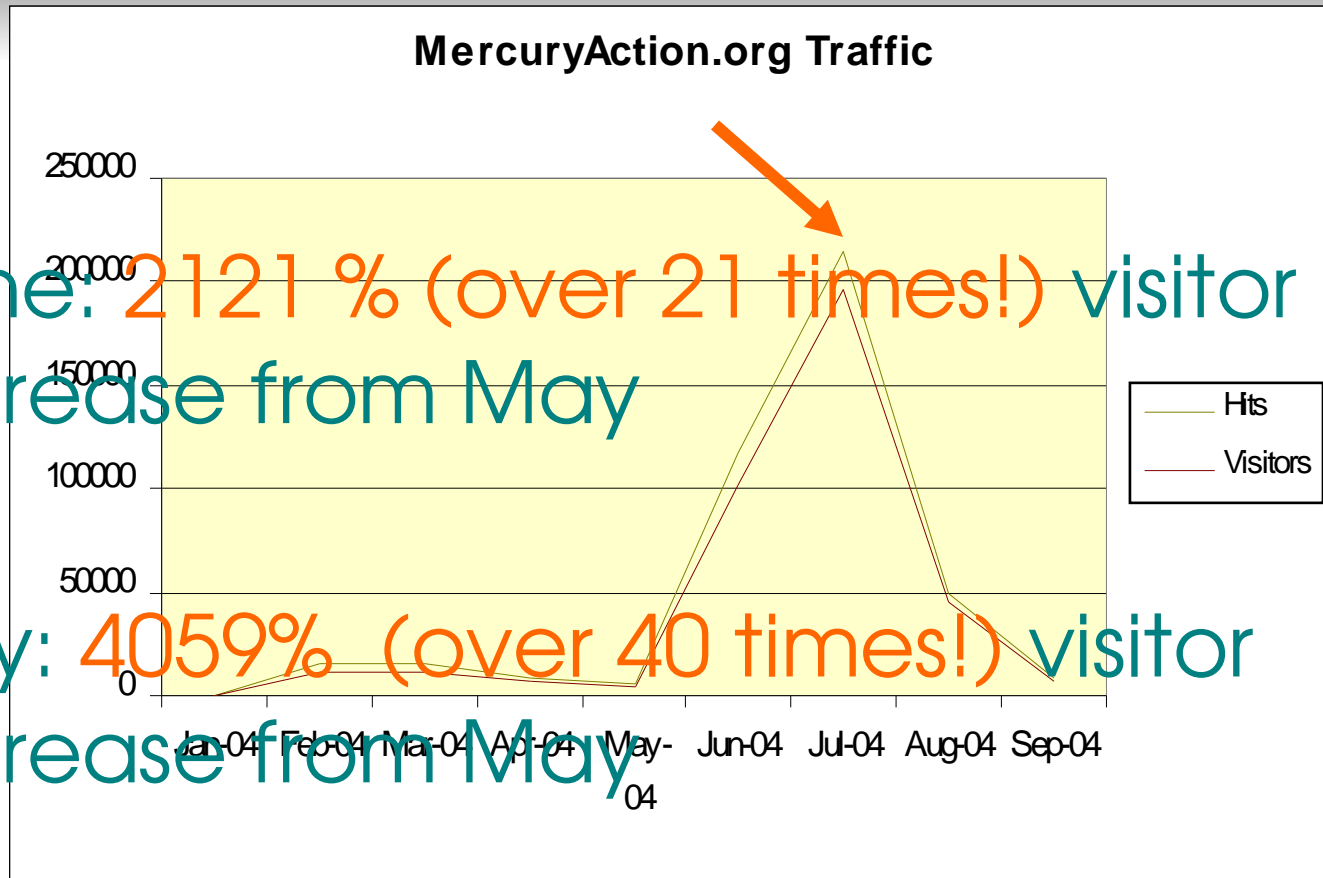
The logo for epicuriously, featuring the word in a green, cursive font with a green underline.The logo for NPR, consisting of the letters 'n', 'p', and 'r' in white on red, black, and blue squares respectively.The logo for SHAPE, featuring the word in a bold, red, sans-serif font.The logo for Parents.com, featuring the word 'Parents' in a large, blue, serif font and '.com' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font, with a purple circle above the 'o'. Below it is the text 'AMERICA'S #1 FAMILY MAGAZINE SINCE 1926'.The logo for americanbaby.com, featuring the word 'american' in a small, blue, sans-serif font above 'baby' in a large, blue, sans-serif font, and '.com' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. A blue and orange bar is below the text.The logo for Cooking Light, featuring the words 'Cooking Light' in a purple, serif font on a light purple rectangular background.

*"I am happy to see people that know this! My sister is pregnant and I told her and her doctor said he never heard anything like that."*

*"Thanks for the link! I like how that site (MercuryAction.org) has links to lots of reports so I can do some investigating of my own. This is a subject I am interested in."*

## Site Received Five Online Awards

# Results



# Total Downloads from MercuryAction.org

**16,143** - Pocket Guide

**9,973** - *Healthy Fish, Healthy Family  
Guide*

**2,839** - Reference for Clinicians

**TOTAL: 28,955**

# Web Actions Taken

- **Comments to the EPA: 2532**
- **Letters to Congress asking for Congressional Attention to the issue: 502**
- **TOTAL: 3034**

# Conclusion

- Earned Media Efforts Helped Make Mercury Proposal Controversial
- Bush administration put on defensive
- Debate focused on Health
- PSR generated dozens of stories on opinion leader broadcasts and in leading newspapers
- PSR experienced a 4000% increase in web traffic
- Efforts continue until March 15, 2005 deadline for final rule

# envirohealthaction

a place where the health community can learn and take action

[Educational Resources and Publications](#) [Action Center](#) [Tell a Colleague](#) [Communicate with Your Peers](#)

	Toxics and Health
	Children's Environmental Health
	Air Pollution and Health
	Climate Change, Energy and Health
	Chronic Disease and the Environment
	Safe Drinking Water
	Land Use and Public Health
	Vulnerable Populations

## ★ featured resources

» **Chronic Disease and the Environment:** Read the companion report to CDC's latest National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals.

## 🔄 the latest

» **Chronic Disease and the Environment:** Learn about CDC's National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals.

» **Air Pollution and Health:** EnviroHealthAction has a new section on New Source Review. Learn more about NSR, its

## 📄 featured action






Tell your Senators to protect public health and homeland security.

[Take Action...](#)

Join the EnviroHealthAction Network



# EnviroHealthAction

	Toxics and Health
	Children's Environmental Health
	Air Pollution and Health
	Climate Change and Health
	Chronic Disease and the Environment
	Safe Drinking Water
	Land Use and Public Health
	Vulnerable Populations

- **Tailored Participation**
- **Information on Specific Issue Areas**
- **Quick and targeted actions**
- **Timely access to reports and science**
- **On-line discussions with**



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a place where the health community can learn and take action

Educational Resources and Publications Action Center Tell a Colleague Communicate with Your Peers

PRINT THIS EMAIL THIS

- Toxics and Health
- Children's Environmental Health
- Air Pollution and Health
- Climate Change, Energy and Health
- Chronic Disease and the Environment
- Safe Drinking Water
- Land Use and Public Health
- Vulnerable Populations



## Children's Environmental Health

Children, infants, and adolescents, face a hostile environment as they grow and develop. Soils, air and water are polluted with chemicals and toxins, heavy metals, and gases that are harmful to growing and developing children. These substances can affect the development and function of multiple systems including the reproductive, endocrine, and respiratory systems, cognitive development, and immunity to disease. Unfortunately, the threats are only made worse by poverty, war, malnutrition and disease.

Children are more sensitive and more vulnerable to environmental health hazards than are adults. On a body-weight basis, infants and young children drink more water,

### In This Section

- » Asthma
- » Birth Defects
- » Toxics and Heavy Metals
- » Healthy Schools

### The Latest

- » Using Indicators to Measure Progress on Children's Environmental Health
- More Resources...

### Learn More

- » Children's Environmental