

Tuna is an Easy and Nutritious Choice

Canned tuna is often underestimated as a versatile fish that can be made into a variety of different meals. With some creativity, tuna can be used in casseroles, salads, wraps, pasta dishes and so much more. Although it may come in a can, it reaps a big reward.

Tuna is affordable, easy to prepare, and nutritious. Since it is a shelf-stable item, tuna should be a staple in everyone's food pantry for when you need to create an easy meal for the family. Whether it is breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack, tuna can be added to the menu for an easy and nutritious choice.

Canned tuna is a great source of lean protein and vitamin B12. It also provides vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids. Some studies have shown that consuming seafood regularly may actually decrease your risk for cardiovascular disease and obesity. Including tuna in your diet is an easy and affordable way to increase your seafood intake.

Nutrients in Tuna include:

- Protein which is essential for muscle development and growth. Including protein sources low in saturated fat, like tuna is a great way to help your child grow.
- Vitamin B12 helps keep the body's nervous system and blood cells healthy. Just one serving of tuna can provide your family with their daily need of Vitamin B12.
- Although many people are familiar with Vitamin D as the sunshine vitamin, It is found in foods as well. Tuna provides Vitamin D to help building healthy bones.
- Omega 3 fatty acid are important for brain development in children and is good for keeping the heart health.

The U.S.D.A. Dietary Guidelines recommends eating a variety of seafood at least twice a week. At least 8 ounces fish per week are recommended for older children and adults. A total of at least 4 ounces of fish per week are recommended for children 2 to 7.

There are different types of tuna available. Here are some guidelines that may help if you are not familiar with tuna.

- Avoid damaged cans with dents or bulges
- Look for tuna canned in water rather than oil.
- Compare sodium content, some tuna contains added salt, while others do not.
- Light vs White/Albacore
 - Light – softer texture and stronger flavor
 - White/ Albacore – firm texture and mild flavor.
- There are flavored tuna packets available that are quick and easy for snacks, but check the sodium content of these before purchasing.
- Refrigerate left over tuna within 2 hours of serving in a covered contain for up to 2 days.

If you are worried about mercury in tuna, it can be safe in limited amount. Pregnant women and children can safely eat up to 12 ounces of light/skipjack tuna and 4 ounces of white/albacore tuna per week.

More information can be found about tuna at www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/Resources/ForYou/Consumers/UCM536321.pdf