



Benefits of Eating Seafood

- The American Heart Association recommends eating a variety of fish and shellfish at least twice a week because it is an excellent source of protein, is low in saturated fat, and a good source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Omega-3 fatty acids such as DHA and EPA found in fish and shellfish can contribute to a healthy heart and proper children's growth and development.
- Virginia seafood such as mackerel, oysters, blue crab, and rockfish are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids. See chart below for other fish and shellfish.

Eat at least two servings of Virginia Seafood per week. If eating more than 2 servings, eat a variety of seafood to maximize on their health benefits and reduce risk. Frozen and canned fish are good choices when fresh fish is not available.

Levels of Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Some Virginia Seafood.

Product	Grams per 3 oz. serving
Mackerel, Atlantic, King	1.025-2.2
Rockfish	0.38
Bluefish	0.85 – 1.2
Catfish	0.15-0.20
Flounder	0.43
Herring	1.71-1.81
Crab Meat	0.34-0.40
Scallops	0.17
Oysters	0.37-1.17
Sea Trout	0.03
Clams	0.24
Croaker	0.2
White Perch	0.3
Herring Oil	11.4
Menhaden Oil	20.6

Eating Raw Seafood

- Eating raw seafood carries a higher food safety risk than eating it thoroughly cooked. Eat raw fish that has been previously frozen so that parasites that may be present are killed.
- People such as pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people with chronic illness should not eat raw or partially cooked fish and shellfish, such as oysters. Also, avoid refrigerated types of smoked seafood except in cooked recipes.

Seafood Storage Guide

Fish, Fillets, Steaks	Purchased frozen; maintained frozen	Purchased fresh; frozen at home	Purchased fresh or thawed; maintained in refrigerator
Lean			
Flounder	10-12 mos.	6-8 mos.	1-1 ½ days
White Perch, Sea Trout, Rockfish (Striped Bass), Croaker, Spot	8-9 mos.	4 mos.	1-2 days
Shellfish			
Blue Crab, Soft-shell crab-live	N/A*	N/A*	1-2 days**
Soft-shell crabs (frozen)	6-9 mos.	4-6 mos.	2 days
Blue Crabmeat-fresh	N/A*	4 mos.	5-7 days
Blue Crabmeat pasteurized	N/A*	N/A*	6 mos. (use 2-3 days after opening)
Scallops	9 mos.	5 mos.	4 days
Oysters live	N/A*	N/A*	7-10 days
Oysters-shucked	N/A*	N/A*	4-7 days
Clams-live	N/A*	N/A*	2-3 days
Clams-shucked	N/A*	N/A*	5 days
Smoked Fish			
Herring	N/A*	2 mos.	3-4 days

Source: National Fisheries Institute N/A*-not applicable or not advised
 **recommended cooking the day of purchase.

Information taken from Virginia Cooperative Extension publication, *Safe and Nutritious Seafood in Virginia*, VCE 348-961 and *Fresh and Frozen Seafood Selecting and Serving it Safely*, FDA, www.cfsan.fda.gov

Created in conjunction with Virginia Marine Products Board
www.virginiaseafood.org

Virginia Seafood

Handling – Safety – Health

The waters of the Chesapeake Bay are the nation's largest and most biologically diverse estuary, yielding more seafood than any of the 840 other estuaries in our land. Add to that some 416 million pounds of finfish and shellfish caught from our rivers, coastal and Atlantic waters.

You don't have to look too far to find a great variety of fresh seafood in Virginia such as flounder, mackerel, croaker and striped bass, bluefish, oysters, clams, scallops, blue crabs and soft-shell crabs to name a few.

Selecting it

- Purchase from stores and markets with a history of providing safe products.
- The area should look and smell clean and employees are knowledgeable about seafood.
- Buy only raw seafood that is properly refrigerated or properly iced.
- Seafood should smell fresh, not fishy, sour or ammonia-like.
- Keep seafood refrigerated after purchased by placing it in a cooler with ice or ice packs to keep the seafood cold for your trip home.
- Fresh and frozen seafood are labeled with their country of origin. Use this information to guide you in your seafood selection.



