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## Salmon Against Breast Cancer

You can hardly pick up a health related magazine these days without finding something about the health benefits of fish, especially those "oily" cold water fish like salmon and sardines. I'd love to talk about sardines (I promise I will later), but I think a lot of people would stop reading at that point, as many find the olfactory experience of sardines a bit intense. So we'll stick to salmon, and especially the wild Alaskan kind.

There are many experimental and laboratory studies which show that omega-3 fatty acids inhibit the growth of breast tumors. But the results of large scale population studies have been mixed, some showing that fish or fish oil intake reduces breast cancer risk, and some showing no association. (Importantly, *none* has shown that fish increases risk of cancer). Two recent studies from Asia, published in 2007, shed more light on the topic. Researchers measured omega-3 and other fatty acid levels in the blood cells of women with breast cancer and women without cancer and compared the levels. The much higher omega-3 levels in the blood of women without breast cancer in both studies suggest again that fish or fish oil intake could be protective against disease.

My conclusion from the available data is that women should be eating cold water fish twice weekly, and possibly taking a fish oil supplement, to reduce breast cancer risk. I acknowledge the scientific purists who would say the data are conflicting on the topic, but I believe their insistence on stronger evidence is not needed here because of the well-known other benefits of fish (heart health etc.) and the minimal to non-existent risk of harm from my recommendation. For something as serious as breast cancer prevention, if an intervention carries very little risk of harm, *any* evidence supporting its use is sufficient.

Why wild Alaskan salmon rather than other kinds? Most Atlantic salmon found in stores and restaurants is farm raised, and there have been significant concerns raised about pollution and contamination of farm-raised salmon with PCB's (cancer causing chemicals). Farmed salmon is also typically lower in omega-3

fats than wild salmon. And wild Alaskan salmon is a designated sustainable fishery, so we are not endangering the oceans, the species of fish, or the planet by eating the healthy harvest of fish. You can buy frozen or canned wild Alaskan salmon year round, but be aware that fresh wild Alaskan salmon is only available during the summer fishing season. Any fresh salmon labeled "wild Alaskan" in the winter months is a fraud, probably farmed salmon being sold at a higher price.

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### Grilled Pesto Salmon

This is a cooking suggestion more than a recipe, as you will find your own favorite recipe for a pesto (basil) sauce.

After coating your salmon fillets in pesto sauce, place on a hot grill. Grill 4 minutes on one side, and 2 or 3 minutes after flipping the fillet. This will avoid overcooking, so it should still be tender and tasty.

A pesto sauce begs for being served with pasta, but you could serve it with brown rice just as well, and a side of steamed mixed vegetables.

This could be a very special meal, so take your time with it, light some candles with dinner and relax when it's time to sit down!

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To your health,

Robert Pendergrast, M.D.

[www.realfoodsthatheal.com](http://www.realfoodsthatheal.com)

P.S. You know 5 women who **deserve** to know how to reduce their cancer risk by food choices. Please forward this e-mail to them by using the link below.

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