

# Consumer Reports proves defective again

By ACSH Staff — December 9, 2010

Two opinions set forward in the last few days by *Consumer Reports* magazine suggest that, as ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan puts it, they should stick to testing cars.

In an [article](#) <sup>[1]</sup>yesterday, the magazine, an off-shoot of the Consumer Union, claimed that pregnant women and children should not eat canned tuna because it contains levels of mercury higher than recommended by...well, by who is not clear. An earlier *CR* [piece](#) <sup>[2]</sup> had warned parents about the dangers of toys made from phthalates, a type of chemical commonly used in plastics.

Regarding the admonition about tuna fish, ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross observes that eating fish is healthy and that at least one [study](#) <sup>[3]</sup> has found that pregnant women who ate fish produced healthier babies than women who did not. Many other studies have attested to the spectrum of health benefits from fish in the diet. Dr. Ross also points out that tuna isn't on the most recent EPA list of the four types of fish with possibly elevated mercury levels that consumers should be aware of. What's more, he says, the study cited by *Consumer Reports* didn't find that the canned tuna they tested rose above levels that the FDA or EPA said were of concern and those levels were based upon the risks posed by consuming tuna every day for seventy years, not occasionally. Tuna is the only fish many Americans eat, and it's reasonably inexpensive.

He asks, Would it be better if expectant mothers ate no fish at all?

The phthalate story speculated upon the risks children faced if they ingested these plastics. Dr. Ross agrees that ingesting phthalates would be dangerous, and he observes that parents should avoid any toys which have small parts children can swallow or choke on. But what is the lesson of the *Consumer Reports* story? he wonders. Do they think parents are going to buy toys made with phthalates and then cut them up and place them on their kids tuna sandwiches so they can eat them? Is this what they're warning us against? Exposure to toy-related phthalates absent ingestion has no adverse health effects.

---

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2010/12/09/consumer-reports-proves-defective-again>

## Links

[1] <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/magazine-archive/2011/january/food/mercury-in-tuna/how-much-tuna/index.htm>

[2] <http://blogs.consumerreports.org/baby/2010/12/holiday-gift-giving-how-to-buy-safe-toys.html>

[3] [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2807%2960277-3/fulltext#article\\_upsell](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2807%2960277-3/fulltext#article_upsell)