

Healthier People

you are what they eat

Wild Pacific salmon are big on **natural foods**, eating mostly zooplankton, tiny invertebrates, squid, shrimp, and small fish they find out in the ocean or in fresh water. They seek out the **best food sources possible**, since they need high-quality foods to stay strong for their long journey out to sea and back. Salmon, wild or farmed, store up all the essential and healthy nutrients and energy that they derive from their food in their fat – a sort of sponge of their habitat and ecosystems.

But farmed salmon eat pellets made up of ground-up fishmeal, and in some cases chicken parts. These pellets often contain **high levels of toxins** and other unwanted chemicals. Farmed salmon chow also contains **chemical additives and dyes** used to turn a farmed fish's grayish flesh more pink and appetizing to consumers; wild salmon, conversely, get their pink hues naturally by eating shrimp and krill.

Salmon raised in net pens are exposed to a smorgasbord of toxins and carcinogens (like PCBs), and these not-so-tasty additions **bioaccumulate** in the farmed salmon's meat and fat, passed on to whomever eats it. In addition, salmon farms routinely treat caged salmon with **antibiotics and pesticides** intended to prevent disease and lice outbreaks in the over-crowded net pens. **Packed like sardines** into a net pen, farmed fish have no room to move and little to do but eat pellets, and eating is certainly encouraged by the farm operators: the fatter the fish, the fatter the price. It follows, then, that farmed salmon have a much higher fat

content than wild salmon, but in the farmed salmon's case that also means higher toxin levels.

It's not surprising, given all of this, that wild salmon are better for you and taste better too. Professional **chefs, nutritionists, scientists, and doctors alike agree** that wild salmon is **superior** to farmed salmon in flavor and health benefits. A recent surge of scientific studies links wild salmon consumption to decreased risks of coronary heart disease and certain cancers. Salmon are also a lean source of **protein and essential Omega 3 fatty acids** ("Omega-3's"). Research by the Environmental Working Group indicates that Omega-3 oils, contained in the salmon's fat, help **alleviate and prevent** some of the symptoms of various inflammatory diseases, the hardening of arteries, Alzheimer's disease and heart attacks.



SALMON FACTS

- > Farmed salmon are given **more antibiotics than any other livestock** by weight.
- > A study published in *Science* found that farmed salmon had up to **10 times higher levels of PCBs and dioxins** than wild salmon.