How will the information be used?

The Alaska Division of Public Health monitors mercury levels over time to help give the best dietary advice to women and children and to assure the safety of the population most at risk—unborn children. By comparing levels over time, we will know if mercury levels are changing.

Should I stop eating fish?

NO! Mercury levels are very low in the kinds of fish most Alaskans eat. The levels found in Alaska salmon are among the lowest in the world.

Is fish a healthy choice?

YES! Fish is a high-protein, lowfat food that should be part of a healthy diet. Also, fish is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are very important for a healthy pregnancy and a growing child.
What should I know?

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- The place where the hair is cut should not be noticeable.
- There is no charge for the mercury test.
- Your results are confidential.

What will happen if I choose to participate?

If you choose to participate, a small sample of your hair about an 1/8 inch in diameter (about the size of this dot •) will be cut at the back of your head close to your scalp.

The sample will be sent to a lab to be tested for mercury. Your health care provider will receive a letter with your results which s/he can discuss with you.

How do I participate?

Talk to your health care provider if you would like more information. You can also contact:

State of Alaska  
Section of Epidemiology  
Environmental Public Health Program  
3601 C Street, Suite 540  
Anchorage, AK  99503  
(907) 269-8000  
dphepienvironmental@health.state.ak.us  
www.epi.alaska.gov