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The PISCES Project

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THE ADVANTAGES OF EATING FISH FOR HUMAN HEALTH

Fish have always been important to man. The harvesting and production of fish has influenced many aspects of human life from seamanship to welfare, power and health.

The fish consumption per capita is expanding globally, and the pattern of fish consumption is changing. In developed economies there is an increasing trend for fish as a culinary specialty rather than a basic food. In developing countries fish is still very much an essential food and a main source of protein. The trends in the modern consumer demands, which lead to increased consumption, are:

- *Demand for health*
- *Demand for quality*
- *Demand for safety*
- *Demand for convenience*
- *Demand for natural unspoilt products.*

Fish is acknowledged as being healthy. As for the demands, fish is a good starting point.

Fish fats (e.g. essential fatty acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids) are especially good for human health. The proteins, vitamins and minerals from fish are a valuable part of our diet. As with all foodstuffs, fish also can cause illness in the humans eating it. This mainly comes from poisoning, air born infections and allergic responses. Poisoning comes from both biotoxins (toxins produced by biological organisms like alga) and from pollution and environmental toxins accumulated in fish.

To avoid these hazards different measures can be taken. In the long term man has to reduce pollution of the environment. The legislative systems (national and European) imposed on the fish processing industry for food safety are important measures in securing consumers well-being. The most important system in this context is the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. This system is widely used both in America and Europe, and is getting increased global usage. But the ultimate responsibility belongs to the consumer. Only the consumer himself/ herself can secure the quality of his/ her food intake.

For more information on this topic visit the PISCES Forum at:

http://www.piscestt.com/pisces/hottopics/advant0_en.asp