

## What are the regulations that seafood farmers, processors, importers, and retailers follow?

### Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP):

Use of the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) symbol shows that a farm or processor follows responsible aquaculture customs established by the Global Aquaculture Alliance, a non-governmental organization. The BAP are applied by the Aquaculture Certification Council (ACC), an association established to certify social, environmental, and food safety standards at aquaculture facilities throughout the world. Tools this nonprofit group uses include site inspections and sanitary controls for shrimp. BAP may expand to other types of seafood in the future.



### Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP):

Since 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires processors of fish and fishery products to use Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems for their operations. HACCP is a control system that processors use to identify where hazards might occur during food production and then put in place strict actions to prevent those hazards. Monitoring and control during each step of the process increases food safety. FDA's HACCP regulation is required for all processors of fish and fishery products that are consumed in the United States – including products from other countries.

### Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP):

All HACCP programs require cGMP to be in place before establishing their HACCP plan. The cGMP address concerns within the food plant such as:

- Workers and the need for personal hygiene and disease control;
- Proper design and maintenance of the plant and its surrounding area so that it is tidy, well-ventilated, and pest-free;
- Sanitation including a clean water source, equipment, ingredients, and materials.

### U.S. Department of Commerce - Seafood Inspection Program (DOC/SIP):

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a part of the DOC, provides a voluntary inspection service to the seafood industry. This service assures compliance with all seafood regulations from whole fish to processed products. Services are offered on fishing boats, in processing plants, and at the retail level.

### Approval of Veterinary Medicine:

The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) of the FDA approves the medical treatments and drugs that can be used in aquaculture operations. Before a new aquaculture drug receives FDA approval, it must be clinically tested for effectiveness and safety – both for the fish and for consumers.

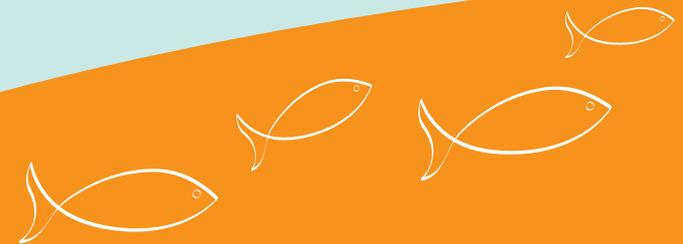
Seafood is one of the most regulated food sources enjoyed by American families.

### Food Safety at Home

- Fresh fish should be bright and shiny with scales intact. Eyes should be clear. Odor should be fresh and mild. Fillets should have moist, elastic flesh without browning.
- Clams, oysters, and mussels should close tightly when tapped. Always toss out shellfish that don't open when cooked.
- Check "sell by" and "use by" dates. If no date is listed, ask the fishmonger how soon you should cook your purchase.
- Always buy seafood from a reputable market where the employees handle fish and shellfish with care and are able to answer questions.
- Store fish in the coldest part of the refrigerator in its original packaging. Keep raw products separated from cooked products.
- To avoid cross-contamination, use different utensils and cutting boards for raw and cooked seafood.
- To learn how long different types of fish keep in the fridge and the freezer, go to the "Cooking Tips" section at [www.AboutSeafood.com](http://www.AboutSeafood.com) to download a handy seafood storage guide created by the National Fisheries Institute. The guide is also a great catch for meal planning.
- Fish is best cooked quickly with high heat. Follow the 10-minute-per-inch rule: Cook a fillet for 10 minutes for every inch of thickness. Cook finfish to an internal temperature of 145 degrees Fahrenheit. When it's done, the fish should flake easily with a fork.

### Seafood By the Numbers

- U.S. per capita seafood consumption totaled 16.5 pounds in 2006, which is a 10 percent increase from 14.8 pounds in 2001.
- Compared to eggs, beef, poultry, and produce, seafood had the lowest number of reported foodborne illness cases from 1990-2004.
- Seafood is a \$65 billion industry in the U.S.
- The U.S. imports about 80 percent of seafood Americans eat, of which 40 percent is farm-raised. Farm-raised seafood helps to maintain the sustainability of wild fish stocks
- According to NOAA Fisheries Service scientists, 80 percent of U.S. fisheries are sustainably managed. Data from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization shows the same for 75 percent of global fisheries.
- Seafood is a delicious source of protein containing omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals that benefit the heart, brain, and entire body.



# Safe Seafood: From Water to Table



Farming

Fish need clean water to grow. Farmers – domestic and abroad – may follow a set of standards called Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) along with regulations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Foreign government officials may also have specific aquaculture laws.

Seafood importers from the U.S. often visit farms overseas to monitor farming processes.



Processing

Fish are processed according to U.S. FDA Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulations.

Processors may also follow BAP protocols and must meet guidelines called Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP).

Voluntary standards to ensure safe seafood processing are offered through the U.S. Department of Commerce – Seafood Inspection Program (DOC/SIP).

As with fish farms, U.S. seafood importers may visit processing facilities overseas to ensure their trading partners are following U.S. food regulations.



Shipping

Importers may only bring in seafood from foreign processors operating under FDA Seafood HACCP. All seafood imports must comply with U.S. standards for safety, wholesomeness, and the “zero tolerance” policy for unapproved chemicals.



Selling

Seafood operations for retail and food service are guided by the FDA Food Code for local, state, tribal, and federal regulators.

Most cases of foodborne illness are a result of improper handling, so it is important that families understand how to keep their seafood safe. Information about how to buy, prepare, store, and cook seafood can be found under the “Cooking Tips” section at [www.AboutSeafood.com](http://www.AboutSeafood.com).