

In this well child visit scenario, Mrs. Stadnicar and her twins are seeing Dr. Mohrig.

The Stadnicar family has been following a vegetarian diet. So at today's visit, Dr. Mohrig's well care protocol includes questions to ensure that the twins are getting their nutritional requirements.

Mrs. Stadnicar informs Dr. Mohrig that her family has recently added fish to their diet and they're no longer strict vegetarians but rather, Pescetarians.

Dr. Mohrig asks why the family made the change. Mrs. Stadnicar explains that the girls were growing and she wants to make sure they had enough protein. She's been giving the girls tuna sandwiches for their lunch several days a week.

Dr. Mohrig explains that some fish have higher levels of mercury and suggested it's best to serve children a variety of fish and seafood that have low levels of mercury, which include haddock, pollock, wild salmon, shrimp, canned chunk light tuna, and catfish. Fish sticks are also usually made from fish that are low in mercury.

Dr. Mohrig advised Mrs. Stadnicar to limit the number of times she served the twins canned chunk white tuna sandwiches to two average meals a week. Toddlers should eat only one to two ounces per meal. While older and larger children may be served two to three ounces per meal.

The doctor warned Mrs. Stadnicar not to feed the children fish high in mercury which includes swordfish, shark, king mackerel, and tilefish. He also mentioned other commonly eaten fish such as albacore, also known as white tuna, and tuna steaks, both of which have more mercury than canned chunk light tuna. If albacore tuna is used to make the tuna sandwiches, the serving size should be cut in half and served only once a week.

By following the recommendation for selecting and eating fish or shellfish, women and young children will still receive the benefits of eating fish and shellfish, and can be confident that they have reduced their exposure to mercury.

Since the family does enjoy fishing, Dr. Mohrig also discussed following fish advisories issued by state or local health officials for sport fish.

Dr. Mohrig reminds Mrs. Stadnicar that there are other inexpensive, low fat sources of protein including beans and eggs. If the family isn't vegetarian, this advice might also include lean chicken and turkey.

The good news is that there are many resources available that can help providers guide their patients. References are provided at the end of this training section to EPA and FDA websites on consumption advice regarding mercury in fish and shellfish.

The Toolkit provides detailed information on the reference card for you to advise your patients on fish consumption for health, and some quick tips for families regarding the prescription slips and the magnets.

This concludes this scenario. Click on the close window located in the bottom right hand corner of this screen to return to the Northside Pediatrics waiting room.