

ORIGINAL

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(CERTIFIED TAPE TRANSCRIPT)



MACRO INTERNATIONAL, INC.

: - - - - - :
:
: FOCUS GROUP ON :
: METHYL MERCURY :
: (PREGNANT WOMEN) :
: (FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION) :
:
: - - - - - :

TUESDAY,

OCTOBER 17, 2000

6:00 P.M.

Moderator: Lynn Halverson

Denver, Colorado

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MS. HALVERSON: I'd like to give you a
3 couple of ground rules. I am an independent
4 moderator. That means that I'm not an expert in
5 the topic we're talking about.

6 What I do is go around the country
7 talking to consumers about different kinds of
8 topics. What that means for you is that I have
9 no real vested interested in you answering my
10 questions one way or the other tonight, so just
11 feel free to be open and honest with me about how
12 you feel about what we're talking about.

13 Everyone's opinions are important.
14 We've got a nice, diverse group of people around
15 the table, and I'd like to hear from every single
16 one of you.

17 Sometimes people tend to dominate
18 conversations. If so, I might say, "Why don't
19 you hold back for a minute, and let's hear from
20 somebody else that we haven't heard from yet."

21 We might do that. There are no right
22 or wrong answers. You're probably going to have

1 some different opinions from the people around
2 the table, and that's fine.

3 We don't have to come to any kind of
4 consensus here, so feel free to speak your mind.
5 I wanted to point out, because I'm doing this as
6 part of a research project, and I'm doing it all
7 over the place, it's really important that I have
8 information, but I don't want to take notes while
9 we're sitting here talking.

10 I've asked them to make a tape. The
11 tape recorder is back there, but the microphone
12 is right here in the ceiling, so if you would do
13 a favor and speak up about as loudly as I am now
14 when we're talking, that would be really helpful.

15 Also, because of the taping, if we can
16 avoid side conversations, that would be helpful,
17 too, because if there are side conversations
18 going on, the tape just hears a blur of things.

19 For the same reason, if we can avoid
20 several people trying to talk at one time. I
21 might have to act as a traffic cop if we have two
22 or three people trying to provide comments, but

1 please bear with me on that.

2 The other thing I wanted to mention is
3 that there are some other people really
4 interested in what you have to say, and they're
5 going around the country with me listening to
6 different focus groups, and they're in the room
7 back there, so you can wave to them if you want.

8 This has really been a helpful process
9 for us here. We've used evidence from the focus
10 groups to try and narrow down the information
11 that we're presenting to you, and all that, so
12 we'll probably use what you folks are saying to
13 help us in talking with other groups as well.

14 What we are talking about today is how
15 consumers should be informed about health risks.
16 Before we get started in the discussion, I'd like
17 to find out about who we have around the table.
18 Maybe we can start with Ingrid and go around the
19 table counter-clockwise. If you could tell me
20 just your first name, and tell us all how long
21 you've been in the Denver area.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Okay. My name is

1 Ingrid, and I'm a native to Colorado, the Denver
2 area.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

4 A PARTICIPANT: And I plan to be for a
5 long time.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, great.

7 A PARTICIPANT: My name's Harry, and
8 I've lived here for 25 years.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Thank you.

10 A PARTICIPANT: I'm Kathy, and I'm a
11 native also.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: I'm from the metro
14 Denver area.

15 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

16 A PARTICIPANT: My name's Julia, and
17 I'm also a native.

18 MS. HALVERSON: My goodness. Okay.

19 A PARTICIPANT: My name's Carol, and
20 I'm not a native. I've been here 22 years.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Where did you
22 come from, Carol?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Syracuse, New York.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

3 A PARTICIPANT: My name's Elizabeth,
4 and I'm from California.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I've been here nine
7 years.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Great.

9 A PARTICIPANT: My name's Ray, from
10 Denver, also a native.

11 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

12 A PARTICIPANT: I'm Tim. I'm another
13 one of them newcomers. I've been here 17 years.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Where did you
15 come from?

16 A PARTICIPANT: Iowa.

17 MS. HALVERSON: All right. But the
18 Broncos have converted you?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, great. Well, as
21 my first question, I would like to ask you some
22 questions about fish. I know you're all kind of

1 land locked around here, but, how many of you do
2 eat fish on a regular basis? One, two, three,
3 four of the group.

4 Okay. The rest of you, who don't eat
5 fish, why is that? Ray?

6 A PARTICIPANT: Well, you just said it.
7 It's a land locked area.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: It's hard to get fresh
10 fish other than trout or catfish or things like
11 that.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Do you eat
13 anything like that, or like it?

14 A PARTICIPANT: I do occasionally, yes.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Elizabeth?

16 A PARTICIPANT: I love to eat halibut,
17 but it's too expensive to eat on a daily basis,
18 and so that's why --

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Carol?

20 A PARTICIPANT: I eat salmon, but not
21 on a regular basis, for the same reason.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: I will eat fish also
2 occasionally, but it's expensive.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So those who
4 don't eat it regularly, it's primarily because of
5 cost. How about tuna fish? Do you eat canned
6 tuna?

7 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

9 MS. HALVERSON: That kind of stuff?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about the
12 rest of you? How often would you say you eat
13 fish?

14 A PARTICIPANT: I'd say, I guess I
15 don't eat it that often. Once a month, maybe.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. What kind do you
17 usually eat?

18 A PARTICIPANT: Trout or seafood.

19 MS. HALVERSON: All right. Harry?

20 A PARTICIPANT: I usually try to eat
21 fish once or twice a week. Usually trout, but
22 sometimes something different, like web (sp)

1 fish.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Is that because
3 you like it, or other reasons?

4 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, because I like
5 it.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Kathy?

7 A PARTICIPANT: We eat it maybe once or
8 twice a month. We eat a lot of tuna, just
9 because it's easy. But when we go out I like to
10 have fish with a little bit of meat or something,
11 so like white fish, or shrimp and pasta or some
12 things like that.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. And Tim?

14 A PARTICIPANT: I eat it about once
15 every week or two.

16 MS. HALVERSON: All right. What kind
17 do you like?

18 A PARTICIPANT: Orange roughly, mostly
19 white fish.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. What have you
21 heard about the benefits of eating fish?

22 A PARTICIPANT: The three fatty acids.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Where have you
2 heard about that, Carol?

3 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, you read it in
4 magazines, and the doctor tells you about it.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. Any
6 other benefits?

7 A PARTICIPANT: Doesn't it have a lot
8 of Vitamin D? There's a vitamin in there that I
9 like. Something about vitamins.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Some kind of
11 vitamins. All right.

12 A PARTICIPANT: I've heard that fish is
13 supposed to be good for the diet.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

15 A PARTICIPANT: And if you eat more of
16 it, but because of cost --

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about any
18 disadvantages of eating fish?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Mercury poisoning.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Can you tell us about
21 that, Ray?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Well, it's been awhile

1 back, but it had to do with tuna, and it had
2 mercury in it, or something, because of that, it
3 was used from the cans or from something or
4 other, and it was causing mercury poisoning.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Then with trout, if you
7 go fishing, you have ruling (sp) disease.

8 MS. HALVERSON: What's that?

9 A PARTICIPANT: It's a disease that
10 affects the fish.

11 A PARTICIPANT: Parasite.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Apparently doesn't
13 affect humans, but who knows.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

15 A PARTICIPANT: One of the
16 disadvantages is bones. That's probably why I
17 don't eat more fresh fish.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

19 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

20 A PARTICIPANT: And it smells up the
21 house.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

2 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Even like the pink
4 salmon that you buy in the grocery store and
5 stuff like that has the bones in it, whereas tuna
6 fish or things like that --

7 A PARTICIPANT: They claim with the
8 salmon you're supposed to eat the bones because
9 of the calcium.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Oh.

11 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

12 A PARTICIPANT: This is strange.

13 MS. HALVERSON: I want to switch gears
14 a little bit and ask you about possible
15 environmental contaminants that you can come into
16 contact with, either through the air you breathe
17 or the water you drink or the foods that you eat.
18 Things like mercury, as Ray mentioned, or lead or
19 pesticides.

20 First of all, have you heard of all
21 these contaminants, mercury, lead, pesticides?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Uh-huh.

2 MS. HALVERSON: When you think of
3 mercury, where would you think of encountering
4 that kind of environmental contaminant?

5 A PARTICIPANT: Lake Erie.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Lake Erie? Okay.

7 A PARTICIPANT: The ocean.

8 A PARTICIPANT: The ocean.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Maybe some mines that
10 have been closed down, like up in the mountains,
11 they used to process gold and silver and so
12 forth, and in the water they used those type of
13 chemicals to process it.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Ingrid?
15 Anything other thing?

16 A PARTICIPANT: That's what I was
17 thinking, and maybe some streams.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about lead,
19 when you think of lead?

20 A PARTICIPANT: Paint, in older
21 buildings.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Carol, where

1 would you think?

2 A PARTICIPANT: Lead, I would think
3 mines also.

4 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

5 A PARTICIPANT: If your water's ground
6 water source, you could have much more heavy
7 metals in it, and also organic fertilizers.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: I'm thinking of
10 processing, like in cans or things that.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Like processing in
12 cans?

13 A PARTICIPANT: Right, like in a canned
14 fish or something.

15 A PARTICIPANT: Maybe in canned soups,
16 anything that has been canned.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Especially old cans.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about
20 pesticides?

21 A PARTICIPANT: Farms.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Farms?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Farms.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Farms.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Vegetables.

5 A PARTICIPANT: I'm worried about
6 foreign, imported items would have more
7 pesticides and things that they watch out for
8 closer here.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Also you probably get a
11 lot of pesticides in dumps and places like that.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Where they would dump
14 garbage. Sanitation dumps.

15 A PARTICIPANT: It seems like they
16 would run off then like rain water or something,
17 pesticides will wash into streams.

18 MS. HALVERSON: If there was an
19 environmental emergency of some kind that a bunch
20 of, let's say there was a flood and a bunch of
21 extra nitrates got into the soil or something
22 like that. How would you expect to hear about

1 that kind of environmental emergency, so that it
2 got into your drinking water system, for example?

3 A PARTICIPANT: News.

4 MS. HALVERSON: On the news?

5 A PARTICIPANT: Radio, television.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Neighbor.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Word of mouth.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Usually on the news.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Usually hear on the
10 news? Okay. How about contamination that happens
11 over time? You talked about pesticides which
12 might be on fruits, or something like that. How
13 would you hear about those kinds of environmental
14 contaminants?

15 A PARTICIPANT: I hear about those on
16 the Discovery Channel.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Programs like Dateline
19 and Nightline will do studies on how different
20 animals have eaten fish or something that would
21 contaminate them with pesticides.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Or the paper.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Or the paper? For
3 something over time?

4 A PARTICIPANT: I think so, if it's
5 something really important, they'll put it,
6 wouldn't they?

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

8 (Simultaneous discussion.)

9 A PARTICIPANT: The EPA would cover it
10 up.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Elizabeth brings up a
12 good issue. When is it news, so that you, as a
13 consumer, are finding that out? Tim, any --

14 A PARTICIPANT: Well, sometimes a
15 health group will suddenly make an issue out of
16 it, or Dateline, or somebody like that, and they
17 can make it news.

18 MS. HALVERSON: How important is it to
19 you to have information about both these
20 catastrophic kinds of things, where your water is
21 poisoned, as well as the over time kinds of
22 things?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Very important.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Very important.

3 MS. HALVERSON: How important is it to
4 you as a consumer?

5 A PARTICIPANT: Very.

6 MS. HALVERSON: For both kinds, or
7 mainly the catastrophic kind?

8 A PARTICIPANT: I'd say both are
9 generally.

10 A PARTICIPANT: You hear about the news
11 of the day type of thing often enough where you
12 feel kind of confident that you might hear about
13 something, but I don't think about down the road,
14 say, in three or five years down the road, what
15 possibly could happen. I don't think we hear
16 about that enough.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. What kind of
18 information would be helpful to you about that
19 kind of thing, down the road?

20 A PARTICIPANT: I know it's hard,
21 because you don't know what's going to happen
22 until it happens type of thing, like, how is it

1 going to affect my children or something if I
2 feed them this type of thing for five years or
3 whatever.

4 Am I going to find out five years later
5 that it's been harmful to them? Sometimes you
6 can't tell until the five years have passed, of
7 course, what the effects are going to be.

8 A PARTICIPANT: It's like an example,
9 20 years ago, there was very little know about
10 the ozone breaking up on us. Now, 20 years
11 later, we have to use these different types of
12 chemicals and hair spray and what have you, now
13 the ozone, there's a hole up there somewhere, now
14 everybody's upset about that, because it was over
15 a 20 year period, something like that, I guess,
16 you know.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Well, what I'd like to
18 concentrate on for the rest of our time is some
19 information about the topic that Ray actually
20 brought up, which is mercury in fish.

21 What they're trying to do is figure
22 out, how do you provide information that

1 consumers need? I think I've got enough copies.
2 I'm going to pass them out here.

3 I'm going to read this out loud, too,
4 if you don't have reading glasses with you.

5 A PARTICIPANT: Okay.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. What I have is
7 three sets of information. The first page is
8 just an introductory paragraph. What we're going
9 to do first is look at the introductory
10 paragraph, and try and talk about that, and then
11 we'll go on to the more descriptive information
12 that they give you later on.

13 That's the format that we'll be
14 following. I have three examples that we'll be
15 reading and discussing. This one is called,
16 although we're doing it first, is called Example
17 Five. That makes sense, doesn't it? All right.

18 "Fish is an important source of high
19 quality protein, vitamins and minerals. Certain
20 fish species, however, are known to contain
21 higher levels of mercury than others.

22 "Pregnant women and women of child

1 bearing age are advised to eat a variety of
2 seafood, and to avoid eating those species that
3 may contain higher levels of mercury. These
4 species are listed below."

5 Let's hand on to this. We'll look at
6 the second page in a bit. When we first look at
7 that information, what I'm interested in is not
8 so much how the information is laid out on the
9 pages, because we're obviously going to be doing
10 something with that, but the type of information
11 that's being provided, and the types of messages
12 in the information.

13 So we're looking at, are the key points
14 made clearly? Who's the target of the message?
15 Is there enough detail? Is there too much
16 detail? That kind of thing.

17 This first introductory paragraph, does
18 that do a good job for you describing the hazard
19 from mercury? Ray, I'm asking you to kind of
20 hold off a little bit because you seem to know
21 something about mercury.

22 A PARTICIPANT: He's just knowledgeable

1 about a lot of things.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Tim?

3 A PARTICIPANT: It doesn't really say
4 what it does. I mean, does it cause liver
5 problems, or heart problems or what?

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

7 A PARTICIPANT: It just says it's bad
8 for your health.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Other responses?
10 Ingrid?

11 A PARTICIPANT: I would like to know
12 what it causes. My first impression is, it's
13 geared towards women of child bearing age and
14 pregnant women, it's possibly birth defects.
15 That's what I'm reading into this.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

17 A PARTICIPANT: Can I say something
18 now?

19 MS. HALVERSON: Yes, Ray.

20 A PARTICIPANT: No, just real quickly,
21 mercury, what it is, is, back in --

22 MS. HALVERSON: Ray, Ray.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Time out?

2 MS. HALVERSON: Time to make you the
3 teacher here. But I'd just like to get the feel
4 from the information you're being provided, what
5 it's saying to you. Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I think it's a little
7 vague, and it tends to make you think the worst
8 possible, than what it's trying to say.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Harry?

10 A PARTICIPANT: This is all kind of
11 funny, because just last night I watched a horror
12 movie on mercury poisoning.

13 (Laughter.)

14 MS. HALVERSON: Oh, no!

15 (Laughter.)

16 MS. HALVERSON: You don't think it's as
17 realistic as information as Ray would have?

18 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, the communicate
19 danger, but they're not very specific about it.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. I can't believe
21 it. I have a guy in my group who watched a movie
22 on mercury poisoning. Carol?

1 A PARTICIPANT: I agree with them. It
2 just makes you say, gee, better not have any
3 fish.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

5 A PARTICIPANT: I think it's pretty
6 vague in what it's trying to say as far as
7 pregnant women, what it does, what would it do.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Now, assume,
9 again, we're going to have a second page of
10 information following, assume that this first
11 paragraph, you're reading it in a newspaper, or a
12 pregnant woman is reading it at a doctor's
13 office, I don't know where, would this paragraph
14 make you want to read further, or not?

15 A PARTICIPANT: Definitely.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

17 A PARTICIPANT: I'd be interested in
18 reading further.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

20 A PARTICIPANT: I mean, if I were
21 pregnant, and if it was going to have some side
22 effect or harm on down the line, I would want to

1 know more about it.

2 In general, just because I don't eat a
3 lot of fish, I would say that the first part,
4 that it mentions that the proteins, vitamins and
5 minerals, and I don't feel like I get enough of
6 it, that I should eat more of it.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Let's go to the
8 second page, then, and I'll read this out loud as
9 well.

10 "FDA warns consumers who are pregnant,
11 thinking of becoming pregnant in the next six
12 months, nursing a baby, choose the fish you eat
13 carefully.

14 "Four types of fish contain high levels
15 of methyl mercury residues that can harm
16 developing fetuses and nursing babies. The
17 methyl mercury can accumulate in your body, so it
18 is important to limit the amount you eat."

19 That's what you were going to say,
20 isn't it, Ray?

21 Okay. "Be aware of these four fish,
22 and limit what you eat: Mackerel: do not eat.

1 Shark: do not eat. Swordfish: do not eat. Tuna:
2 fresh or frozen, three times a month; canned,
3 four three-ounce servings a week.

4 "All other types of fish are safe to
5 eat, such as shellfish, halibut, or processed
6 fish, such as fish sticks."

7 Okay. So you've read this entire sheet
8 of information. What is the most important point
9 that you take from it, Kathy?

10 A PARTICIPANT: I think the part that
11 tells me what it can do to your body.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Then, of course,
14 telling me the specifics of which ones to use or
15 whatever.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Elizabeth?

17 A PARTICIPANT: I don't think it's
18 telling me why it's happening.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Why it's happening,
21 that we'll, you know?

22 A PARTICIPANT: What's causing it?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, what's causing
2 it.

3 A PARTICIPANT: What's causing the
4 mercury to be put into fish?

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Pretty serious.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

8 A PARTICIPANT: You have to be pregnant
9 to take heed of this, what I'm reading here.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Can I make an
11 assumption that there are no pregnant women in
12 this group? Is that correct?

13 A PARTICIPANT: No, I am.

14 MS. HALVERSON: You are?

15 (Laughter.)

16 A PARTICIPANT: No.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So here, none of
18 us are pregnant women, and we're reading this
19 information. What does that, what kind of
20 information is that for you, Elizabeth? You were
21 saying --

22 A PARTICIPANT: Well, I'd like to know

1 more information on why? How's this coming
2 about? What are we doing? Are we contaminating
3 these fish with chemicals? You hear about
4 chemicals being thrown into the river, you know.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: And, why is it just
7 these fish that seem to be affected more than the
8 others.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Because I eat tuna, but
11 now I'm looking, it says three times a month.
12 Well, good thing I stopped eating it. I used to
13 eat tuna at least once a week. I'd make tuna
14 patties for the family.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Um-hmm.

16 A PARTICIPANT: See, that's one thing.
17 Even though I'm not pregnant or in that area, it
18 still would concern me. If it can affect an
19 unborn child, or something like that, could it
20 not also affect young children, when you're
21 preparing it at home?

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. You're allowed

1 to speak, Ray.

2 (Laughter.)

3 MS. HALVERSON: I just didn't want you
4 to give away the information.

5 A PARTICIPANT: I don't know. It has a
6 lot of information in there. But again, I would
7 like to know the symptoms of, maybe, mercury
8 poisoning, in you --

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

10 A PARTICIPANT: -- and find out some
11 symptoms, and when, actually, I should get the
12 symptoms.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

14 A PARTICIPANT: I think that would be
15 very beneficial. If one was pregnant, like you
16 were saying, if you were going in to see a doctor
17 or something like that, and you saw this first
18 page article in the paper or something, these are
19 some of the questions, or maybe some of the
20 things that you would want to hear from the
21 doctor, or, say, have the doctor give you this
22 kind of a list, that they have more research, or

1 something like that.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Kathy brought up
3 the issue that, well, she's not pregnant, but
4 what about young children?

5 A PARTICIPANT: You know, how safe
6 would it be for people who are pregnant? What
7 levels would be safe?

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So if you saw a
9 chart, and it warns consumers who are pregnant,
10 thinking of becoming pregnant, nursing a baby,
11 follow this advice, how do you interpret that
12 information for you?

13 A PARTICIPANT: I wouldn't think it
14 would apply to me.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

16 A PARTICIPANT: If I was a male reading
17 this, I wouldn't think it would be applied to me.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

19 A PARTICIPANT: I wouldn't.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Although it does,
21 because it says --

22 (Simultaneous discussion.)

1 A PARTICIPANT: I wouldn't take a
2 chance.

3 A PARTICIPANT: -- mercury --

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, Carol and Tim,
5 Carol, can you repeat that, because Tim was
6 talking at the same time, and I want to hear both
7 of you.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Well, the one sentence
9 is that methyl mercury can accumulate in your
10 body. It doesn't, that can be for anybody, not
11 just pregnant or becoming pregnant.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

14 MS. HALVERSON: And Tim?

15 A PARTICIPANT: I would be reluctant to
16 buy it. I probably wouldn't. I mean, if there's
17 two kinds of fish side by side, and I knew this
18 one contained mercury and this one didn't, I'd
19 definitely buy the one that didn't.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Now, there are
21 these three that say, "Do not eat." And then for
22 tuna, it says, "Fresh or frozen, three times a

1 month, or canned tuna, four three-ounce servings
2 a week."

3 How would you respond to the canned
4 tuna?

5 A PARTICIPANT: I would never buy it
6 again. I would cut back if I ate a lot. I would
7 cut back on it quite a bit. I'd have it
8 occasionally.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

10 A PARTICIPANT: You know, the funny
11 part is, this has been out, like I said, for 20
12 years. I know there's mercury in that tuna. I
13 still eat it, you know?

14 Again, like I said, I don't know how
15 much mercury, after a prolonged period of time,
16 would accumulate in my liver, or wherever it
17 accumulates, and what it's going to do to me.

18 What are -- I mean, I know mercury
19 drives people crazy, all right. It's like the
20 Mad Hatter in Alice in Wonderland. Back in the
21 days they used mercury to clean hats, a lot of
22 those people went crazy because of that.

1 Getting to the point, how much, over a
2 prolonged period of time, like I say, if you ate
3 tuna for 20 years, straight, every day, what's
4 going to happen to you?

5 What are some of the symptoms, so I can
6 know to watch out for it, if I'm going to eat the
7 tuna or the --

8 MS. HALVERSON: Why do you think they
9 list canned tuna separately?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Well, there's such a
11 difference in the time frame, from three times a
12 month to four times a week. That's a lot of
13 difference.

14 A PARTICIPANT: Maybe it's because of
15 the processing.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

17 A PARTICIPANT: It gets rid of some of
18 it.

19 A PARTICIPANT: Or maybe the way the
20 different fish dilute the mercury in their own
21 bodies. Maybe these fish, like mackerel, shark
22 and swordfish, might not be able to dispose of

1 mercury quickly through their own body process.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

3 A PARTICIPANT: And tuna, you know.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Any other?

5 A PARTICIPANT: Yes, I think it could
6 also be due to pressures, that might be a bigger
7 industry.

8 (Simultaneous discussion.)

9 A PARTICIPANT: Much more lobbying
10 power.

11 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

14 A PARTICIPANT: I can see that --

15 (Simultaneous discussion.)

16 A PARTICIPANT: -- tuna have some big

17 --

18 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

19 A PARTICIPANT: You're right.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Supply and demand.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. In general, is
22 the information about how often to eat the fish

1 on this chart easy to understand, or not?

2 A PARTICIPANT: Yes.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Yes.

4 MS. HALVERSON: It is easy to
5 understand? Would it be easy to use, in terms of
6 monitoring your own, or a pregnant woman's --

7 A PARTICIPANT: I think it would be.
8 Just put it on your wall and look at it, and
9 don't eat this, and --

10 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

11 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: I think, like Ray said
14 earlier, as far as signs and symptoms, like if
15 you have a cold or flu or something like that,
16 what are the things to watch out for if you have
17 too much mercury. How's it going to --

18 A PARTICIPANT: I mean, are you going
19 to start going blind, or you start walking with a
20 limp, or something, you know, the mercury's going
21 to -- I'd better watch out for that.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Harry's the expert on

1 what really happens with mercury poisoning after
2 his movie, so you'll have to ask him afterwards.

3 A PARTICIPANT: It will degrade the
4 insulating sheathing around your nerves, and your
5 nerves will short out and you'll go into
6 convulsions.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. I'm passing
9 around something now that's called "Example
10 Three". Does everybody have a copy, there? Okay.
11 This one, I'll also read out loud.

12 "A recent report from the National
13 Academy of Science has looked at the evidence
14 that mercury can cause learning problems in
15 children exposed to high levels of mercury in the
16 mother's diet during pregnancy.

17 "Since fish are the main source of
18 dietary exposure to mercury, the EPA and FDA are
19 providing guidelines about the kinds and amount
20 of fish that pregnant and nursing mothers, and
21 women of child bearing age can safely eat without
22 exposing their children to any significant risk

1 of harm."

2 Okay, let's stay on this first page
3 again, and I'd like to ask the same kinds of
4 questions. First of all, does this do a good job
5 of describing what the hazard is from mercury for
6 you?

7 A PARTICIPANT: No.

8 MS. HALVERSON: No?

9 A PARTICIPANT: It just says they're
10 going to. It says they're going to tell you.

11 MS. HALVERSON: It says they're going
12 to tell you. Okay.

13 A PARTICIPANT: I was just going to say
14 the same thing. It says, "learning problems". I
15 think they need to expound on that a little bit
16 more.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: I also --

19 A PARTICIPANT: Learning problems could
20 be a lot of different things.

21 A PARTICIPANT: I also think these
22 should also include adults along with children in

1 there. I mean, I understand children are our
2 future, but then again, I'd like to know what's
3 going to, again, some of the --

4 A PARTICIPANT: What it's going to do
5 to you.

6 A PARTICIPANT: -- yeah.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Any other
8 responses? Would this kind of introduction help
9 you understand who should be paying attention to
10 the advice, and why?

11 A PARTICIPANT: No.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Why is that?

13 A PARTICIPANT: Because in the first
14 one, it mentioned pregnant women.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Um-hmm.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Now, if this is the
17 intent of the warning, it should include,
18 "Pregnant women should not eat these things in
19 child bearing age." Then it should put, also
20 include children, say, "This may cause your
21 children to have a learning disability."

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Because of the, you
2 know. Include that in there. So I don't think it
3 really warns all the things.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Carol? What's
5 your response?

6 A PARTICIPANT: Not bad, but it should
7 include everybody.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Also, that warning
10 about if you're planning on getting pregnant.
11 That's not in this one.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Julia, it looked
13 like you were going to say something?

14 A PARTICIPANT: No, no.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. Is
16 there anything about the introduction that sounds
17 confusing to you? No? All right. And the
18 important information that's missing, Ingrid, you
19 said it should include, "If you're planning to
20 become pregnant."

21 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Any other

1 important information missing?

2 A PARTICIPANT: I think they probably
3 figure when they write, "Women of child bearing
4 age" that includes people planning on being
5 pregnant, in their minds.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

7 A PARTICIPANT: In their minds, they
8 probably figure that covers that.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right, let's
10 go to the next page. As you can tell, this is a
11 different format and different kinds of
12 information that they're providing, so try and
13 forget the first one that we looked at, and just
14 look at this information.

15 It says, "What kind of fish should I
16 eat? Women who are, or may become pregnant
17 within six months, and nursing mothers, should
18 consume types of fish known to have low levels of
19 mercury, see Table 1, and should avoid fish known
20 to have high levels of mercury, see Table 2.

21 "The fish in Table 1 can generally be
22 eaten a total of two to three times per week

1 without concern for adverse effects from mercury,
2 with each meal size being six ounces of cooked
3 fish or eight ounces of uncooked fish. Breaded
4 fish sticks, fish sandwiches, and imitation crab
5 meat are generally made from these fish, and so
6 usually have low levels of mercury."

7 "Table 1: Fish and seafood that are
8 generally low in mercury; may be consumed a total
9 of two to three times per week by pregnant and
10 nursing women."

11 They list in three different columns
12 all different kinds of fish and seafood that are
13 generally low in mercury.

14 "What fish should I avoid? The fish in
15 Table 2 are known to have high levels of mercury,
16 and should be avoided by women who are, or may
17 become pregnant within the next six months, and
18 nursing mothers."

19 "Table 2: Fish and seafood that are
20 generally high in mercury should be avoided by
21 pregnant and nursing women. King mackerel,
22 shark, swordfish, tile (sp) fish (ocean white

1 fish).

2 "What about tuna? For canned tuna,
3 which is the most frequently consumed purchased
4 fish, a total of two to three three-ounce cans
5 may be consumed per week.

6 "What about fish not on the list? For
7 all other fish and seafood not listed,
8 consumption should be limited to one meal per
9 week, six ounces cooked, eight ounces uncooked,
10 by women who are or may become pregnant within
11 six months, and nursing mothers.

12 "This applies to fish bought in a store
13 or restaurant, and to all fresh water fish caught
14 by you or your family in local waters."

15 A PARTICIPANT: This is too wordy.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Too wordy?

17 A PARTICIPANT: Too much information to
18 know. I mean, it seems like all the other fishes
19 are low with mercury. Fine. I don't care. What
20 I want to know is, which ones have high levels of
21 mercury, and that should be addressed. Not this
22 other stuff.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about the
2 rest of you?

3 A PARTICIPANT: It would be interesting
4 to read once, you know.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: It would answer some
7 questions. But it wouldn't be a constant
8 reference.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

11 A PARTICIPANT: I think sometimes if it
12 is too lengthy, you tend to skip things on there.
13 I think if it gets to the point, and yet you know
14 that you yourself can get more information.

15 A PARTICIPANT: I think this is pretty
16 good, because instead of just describing two to
17 three different kinds of fish you can eat, it's
18 the whole much larger list here, and it includes
19 shellfish.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So you like
21 having the list of what you can eat there?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

2 A PARTICIPANT: I think that's
3 beneficial also. I mean, if I were pregnant, or
4 going in to see a doctor, these are the kinds of
5 things, you know, what can I eat.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Again, I want to
7 remind you, we don't have to come to consensus
8 here. What's important is just hear how
9 everybody feels. I've heard some descriptions
10 of, "I don't want that much information," and
11 others saying, "I kind of like that." How about
12 the rest of you?

13 A PARTICIPANT: I like the information
14 also.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. What is it that
16 you like about it, Ingrid?

17 A PARTICIPANT: Well, it just kind of
18 eliminates some questions that you might have as
19 to which kind of fish you can eat. But then, if,
20 I mean, and then, you can do further research on
21 your own, but you could always just cut out the
22 list of the fish you can eat and post it

1 someplace.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah. At least it's
3 something you can take to the store and say, I
4 can buy these, don't buy these.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Any others that
6 haven't spoken yet? Carol?

7 A PARTICIPANT: I like the list,
8 actually, because I'm just used to hearing about
9 tuna and my halibut, but this gives me wider
10 information here.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Carol?

12 A PARTICIPANT: I agree. It's good.

13 MS. HALVERSON: So you kind of like the
14 list too?

15 A PARTICIPANT: Yes. Definitely.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How do they
17 treat the issue of tuna here?

18 A PARTICIPANT: They want you to eat
19 it.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

22 A PARTICIPANT: More than the others.

1 A PARTICIPANT: This a tuna company?

2 A PARTICIPANT: I know.

3 (Laughter.)

4 A PARTICIPANT: Put it in our computer,
5 here.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Does there need to be
7 an exception made for tuna, or can it be
8 classified as good or bad?

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, all right.
10 Harry, you said, "classified as good or bad."
11 Are you saying that one table is saying these are
12 good fish and the other table is saying these are
13 bad fish?

14 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

15 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, which table says
17 they're good fish?

18 A PARTICIPANT: The larger one.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So Table 1? And
20 Table 2 is bad fish?

21 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, you can look at
22 it that way if you want to.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Where is tuna,
2 then? If I --

3 A PARTICIPANT: Kind of in the middle.

4 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

5 (Simultaneous discussion.)

6 MS. HALVERSON: Let me try and --

7 A PARTICIPANT: We know tuna's not any
8 of the three categories there.

9 A PARTICIPANT: It's not in the --

10 A PARTICIPANT: It's by itself.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. So
12 you have your "good fish" up here, and you're
13 saying that's Table 1, and your "bad fish" down
14 here, and that's Table 2. Where's tuna?

15 A PARTICIPANT: It's not there.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Where would you put it.

17 A PARTICIPANT: It's in a --

18 MS. HALVERSON: If this were on a
19 continuum --

20 A PARTICIPANT: Table 3.

21 MS. HALVERSON: -- good to bad, bad to
22 good, where would you put the tuna?

1 A PARTICIPANT: In the middle.

2 A PARTICIPANT: In the middle.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Tuna.

4 A PARTICIPANT: I think it would be
5 higher than that. Because if you eat it the most
6 often, it should be at the top.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Up here?

8 A PARTICIPANT: I would think so.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Probably second or
10 first. Right there.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Kathy, you want to come
12 up and put it where you think it belongs?

13 A PARTICIPANT: Well, I also think it
14 depends on whether you're talking about pregnant
15 women or non-pregnant women, which I don't think
16 we're going to --

17 A PARTICIPANT: See, I understood it
18 that if you can eat it that many times a week, it
19 would be like the first.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Anyone else have
21 a different place you'd like to put it?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah. I would put it

1 lower.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Tim, Tim. Come here.
3 Come here. Get your act up here.

4 (Laughter.)

5 A PARTICIPANT: I would put it about
6 right there.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, and why would
8 that be?

9 A PARTICIPANT: Just because it sounds
10 fishy.

11 (Laughter.)

12 MS. HALVERSON: All right. Okay. So
13 tuna, we've got in three different places here.
14 All right. I have another question. How about
15 this last section that says, "Fish not on the
16 list. For all other fish and seafood not
17 mentioned, consumption should be limited to one
18 meal per week by women who are or may become
19 pregnant within six months, and nursing mothers.

20 "This applies to fish bought in store
21 or restaurant, and to all fresh water fish caught
22 by you or your family in local waters." Where

1 would you put all those other fish? Julia?

2 A PARTICIPANT: I want to come over and

3 --

4 MS. HALVERSON: Those other fish?

5 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I like them right
7 there.

8 A PARTICIPANT: If you're going to
9 catch it yourself, you have to be careful about
10 where you catch it, because some streams can be
11 more contaminated than others.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So they're
13 saying here, good fish, bad fish, according to
14 your classifications. I'm trying to figure out,
15 you know, we've had some confusion about tuna,
16 here, and how about the fish not on the list?
17 Are they closer to the good fish table, or to the
18 bad fish table?

19 A PARTICIPANT: We don't know.

20 (Simultaneous discussion.)

21 A PARTICIPANT: I wouldn't be concerned
22 about any other fish. I mean, if I don't know

1 the names of them in the first place.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Why does it seem like
3 they addressed all the ocean fish? What about
4 fresh water fish, like catfish and trout, what
5 have you?

6 MS. HALVERSON: All right. What does
7 this page of information tell you about that,
8 then?

9 A PARTICIPANT: It says all other fish.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

11 A PARTICIPANT: It states that you can
12 be limited to one meal per week, where this up
13 here says, the good fish, two to three times per
14 week.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

16 A PARTICIPANT: So it's at the bottom
17 of the good fish, before the bad fish.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

19 A PARTICIPANT: I also noticed that the
20 fish it says are bad are the larger fish that are
21 much older and they've had more time to
22 accumulate the poison.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Another thing I noticed
3 is, they talk about canned tuna, but not fresh
4 tuna.

5 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, that's true.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So that's a
7 difference here? How, again, imagine you're a
8 pregnant woman, and this is the information that
9 you get. Ray, think back to when you were
10 pregnant.

11 (Laughter.)

12 A PARTICIPANT: It was years ago.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Why am I giving Ray
14 such a hard time today? I don't know. It's just
15 fun. All right. So we're thinking back to when
16 we were pregnant, and we have this information.
17 How easy is this advice to follow?

18 A PARTICIPANT: To me it would be real
19 easy.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Real easy?

21 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: It seems like it would
2 be fairly easy to follow.

3 A PARTICIPANT: I think you could just
4 take this to the store with you.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I mean, even when
7 you're going out to a restaurant, you could just
8 put it in your purse and make sure that, like my
9 sister has allergies, severe allergies to fish.
10 When she goes out to restaurants, she has to make
11 sure that she doesn't eat certain kinds of fish,
12 or else she has a severe reaction.

13 It's happened a couple of different
14 times when she's gone out, and she'll take a
15 bite, and she'll say, "Look, I asked you, does
16 this have a certain kind of fish in it." She
17 knows right away, and she'll get severe reactions
18 to it.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about the
20 rest of you? Oh, go ahead, Elizabeth.

21 A PARTICIPANT: You know, if I was
22 pregnant and read this, I probably would not eat

1 fish, period.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Why would that be?

3 A PARTICIPANT: Just to be safe.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

5 A PARTICIPANT: I don't know. It's
6 just something about what's going on here, you
7 know? Maybe look at this tuna, and I used to like
8 tuna, but now this is giving me thoughts, you
9 know, why is this sticking out, you know, the
10 tuna? Why are we talking so much about tuna?

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Well, you're taking
13 other risks by not eating fish.

14 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

15 A PARTICIPANT: The other health risks
16 from the fatty acids that you need.

17 A PARTICIPANT: And then the tuna has
18 this one can that has water, and one that has
19 oil, right? Isn't that, when you go to buy?

20 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, one packed in
21 water, one packed in oil.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

2 A PARTICIPANT: So which one's better
3 for you?

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

5 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

6 A PARTICIPANT: See, I like the other
7 format better than this one, because I think this
8 one's almost a little too time consuming to get
9 the information that you're looking for.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

11 A PARTICIPANT: The other one may be
12 more vague, but it pretty much tells you yes or
13 no, and then it kind of leaves it up to you.

14 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, the other one,
15 again, it tells you right off the bat, don't eat
16 this fish. The other one's, go on and eat, but
17 do it in moderation, you know.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Is it limited, or --

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, let's set this
20 one aside, and the third example I want to show
21 you is called "Example Four" just to keep us all
22 confused.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. This one says,
3 "Seafood is an important and growing part of the
4 American diet. Seafood provides significant
5 nutritional benefits to consumers.

6 "Some seafood, particularly large ocean
7 fish and fresh water fish caught in contaminated
8 waters, may contain levels of mercury that pose a
9 rise to babies of pregnant and nursing mothers.

10 "The FDA and EPA advise women who are
11 pregnant, or may become pregnant within six
12 months, or are nursing mothers, to follow the
13 safe eating guidelines outlined below.

14 "This advice should not be taken as a
15 need to abstain from consuming seafood, except as
16 indicated."

17 All right. Does this handout do a good
18 job of describing the hazard for mercury?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I think it does.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

21 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, and it doesn't

1 come right off with a big threat. It kind of
2 first reassures you that it's okay to eat it if
3 it's not on this list.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Kathy?

5 A PARTICIPANT: I agree.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I agree with it too.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

8 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Maybe the Canning
10 Institute probably wrote this up.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Who did?

12 A PARTICIPANT: The Canning Institute.

13 A PARTICIPANT: They want us to eat
14 more tuna.

15 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Then you can tell them,
17 you know, we accept that part of our diet.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Would this kind of
19 introduction help you understand who should be
20 paying attention to the advice that's going to
21 follow?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

2 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

3 MS. HALVERSON: It would?

4 A PARTICIPANT: I think it's a little
5 more kinder. It doesn't come out with a -- the
6 fact, it scares you.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Scary.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Stats.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Do you find anything
12 about this particular introduction confusing?

13 A PARTICIPANT: No.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Anyone?

15 A PARTICIPANT: Not confusing.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Not confusing? Okay.

17 A PARTICIPANT: I would just think, how
18 would you know, like if you're fishing, how would
19 you know how contaminated the water is that --

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

21 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Is there any important

1 information that's missing from this
2 introduction? You've become kind of experts on
3 mercury, now. Any information missing?

4 A PARTICIPANT: The only thing it
5 doesn't address in this one that it did in the
6 last one is that it may affect your child's
7 learning abilities.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: But then again, this
10 mentions that it causes birth defects, so that's,
11 I don't know, maybe if that's bothering, you can
12 call the doctor up or call Sea King or something
13 and ask them.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Is the
15 information that was in the other introduction
16 about causing learning problems, is that
17 important information to contain in the
18 introduction or not?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, I think so. I
20 think someone should know. I would like to know
21 that.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

1 A PARTICIPANT: That would be important
2 to me if I had children.

3 A PARTICIPANT: This is just an
4 introduction. It would make you want to read on
5 to see what kind of risks it poses.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Who else is affected
8 besides babies?

9 MS. HALVERSON: All right. Let's go
10 ahead and read on, then.

11 "Fish safe eating guidelines. Fresh
12 water farm raised catfish or trout: there is no
13 mercury --

14 A PARTICIPANT: Yay!

15 (Laughter.)

16 MS. HALVERSON: -- "in these species."
17 Never have I had a cheering section.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MS. HALVERSON: "Ocean fish: Swordfish,
20 shark, king mackerel, and tile fish: no meals for
21 women who are pregnant, women who may become
22 pregnant in the next six months, and nursing

1 mothers.

2 "American favorites: canned tuna,
3 three- ounce serving: up to four three-ounce
4 servings per week for women who are pregnant,
5 women who may become pregnant in the next six
6 months, and nursing mothers.

7 "No limits for others as part of a
8 balanced diet. There are no limits for anyone as
9 part of a balanced diet for the following top
10 species, which make up the majority of the
11 seafood market: canned salmon, shrimp, salmon,
12 pollock, catfish, cod, clams, flounder, scallops,
13 and fish sticks. No one should eat lobster
14 tamale."

15 A PARTICIPANT: What's lobster tamale?

16 MS. HALVERSON: Again, I warn you, I'm
17 not an expert here, I'm the topic --

18 A PARTICIPANT: That must be Spanish or
19 something, to be a lobster tamale.

20 MS. HALVERSON: Does anyone know what
21 lobster tamale is?

22 A PARTICIPANT: Hmm-umm.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Never heard of that
2 one.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Isn't it --

5 MS. HALVERSON: Ingrid might know.

6 A PARTICIPANT: No, you can probably
7 explain it better than me.

8 MS. HALVERSON: I don't think I can.

9 A PARTICIPANT: This is what I think it
10 is.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

12 A PARTICIPANT: I'm not a hundred
13 percent sure. I think it's like the inside part,
14 the green stuff inside of it.

15 MS. HALVERSON: You know how you get a
16 whole lobster?

17 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, some people like
18 it.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. I've only had it
20 explained to me in other focus groups, and that's
21 pretty much what they said, so again, as I said,
22 I'm not an expert here.

1 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

2 MS. HALVERSON: All right. So you read
3 that information along with the "Example Four"
4 introduction, and what do you think is the most
5 important piece of advice that you take from
6 this?

7 A PARTICIPANT: Still, which fish to
8 avoid.

9 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

10 A PARTICIPANT: It says, "No meals for
11 women." They don't say you can have one every 30
12 days. They tell you exactly no meals.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

14 A PARTICIPANT: Be cautious about what
15 type of fish you're picking.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

17 A PARTICIPANT: With this one, I'd be
18 more inclined to continue eating fish than the
19 other ones. The other ones kind of scared me,
20 and it's like, well, maybe I should just become a
21 vegetarian.

22 MS. HALVERSON: You would continue

1 eating fish, are you talking as if you were a
2 pregnant woman, or as yourself?

3 A PARTICIPANT: Just in general.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Oh, okay.

5 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

6 MS. HALVERSON: All right, so it
7 doesn't scare you off?

8 A PARTICIPANT: No, this one doesn't
9 scare me off. And the other did kind of.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Ah. That didn't
11 exactly come out earlier. All right, so in the
12 first two examples we were looking at, were
13 others of you feeling that way as well?

14 A PARTICIPANT: Being that I don't eat
15 much fish anyway, and I'm on a limited budget, I
16 tend to feel like whether I was pregnant or not,
17 given the information that we've read, the things
18 that said to eat in moderation or not eat at all,
19 I wouldn't eat any of those, but if is said it
20 was safe to eat the other ones, I probably would
21 go ahead and eat that.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Any other

1 reactions to the difference between the first two
2 and this one, as Ingrid said?

3 A PARTICIPANT: I know I would like to
4 see which areas of the country is more
5 contaminated than the other so you'd know what
6 the source of your fish was.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So you'd like
8 more information on the source of the fish in
9 terms of contamination levels?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

11 MS. HALVERSON: All right.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Are there any Pacific
13 fish, you mean, Gulf of Mexico?

14 A PARTICIPANT: Or that's where there's
15 like there are certain areas of Colorado that,
16 because of the gold mining, have high mercury in
17 some areas, and you'd like to know which river
18 your fish came out of.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right.
20 Let's go back to this, and again, we're all
21 pregnant women here, and we're thinking, "How
22 well does this particular chart explain to me how

1 I, as a pregnant woman, should be responding? I
2 want to eat fish, because I want those Omega-3
3 fatty acids." Right, Carol?

4 A PARTICIPANT: That's right.

5 MS. HALVERSON: So, I want to eat fish.
6 Does this chart tell me how I should choose my
7 fish?

8 A PARTICIPANT: Looks like it does.

9 MS. HALVERSON: It does.

10 (Simultaneous discussion.)

11 MS. HALVERSON: What was that, Harry?

12 A PARTICIPANT: It says what not to
13 eat, but it doesn't really say what to eat.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

15 A PARTICIPANT: It just tells you
16 American favorites.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: To me, as a shopper,
19 when I go, I don't particularly like to spend a
20 lot of time in the grocery store. So if I know
21 what I can't, that eliminates that area, so then
22 I know these others would be okay.

1 If I was pregnant myself, I think I
2 would be asking my doctor more information
3 anyway, and maybe have more information when I
4 went to the store on particular stuff. But I
5 think this kind of cuts down on times like, I
6 know I can't have those, and these are ones I
7 can.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: I think it's kind of
10 harder to distinguish on this than the last one,
11 especially when they throw that last sentence in
12 about, no one should eat lobster.

13 You know, here's a list of stuff that's
14 safe, and then they throw that in there. It just
15 throws a monkey wrench into the whole thing.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

17 A PARTICIPANT: Is there any others?
18 Then I've got to read it real careful.

19 A PARTICIPANT: Like a P.S.

20 (Laughter.)

21 A PARTICIPANT: By the way.

22 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, let's again focus

1 on the advice regarding canned tuna here. What
2 do you think of this advice regarding canned
3 tuna?

4 A PARTICIPANT: I liked it because I
5 think it pretty much says the same thing as all
6 the others, but it just, I liked the way it was
7 phrased.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, and what was it
9 about the way it was phrased that you liked,
10 Kathy?

11 A PARTICIPANT: I think it started out
12 that, more positive, like, canned tuna up to that
13 many, you could have, and it was like there are
14 no limits for all others as part of a balanced
15 diet. So it's like it brought in other people
16 than just pregnant people.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about that
18 particular factor. Did all of them bring in
19 people other than pregnant women? Or was it just
20 this one, do you remember?

21 A PARTICIPANT: I don't remember that
22 the others did.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

2 A PARTICIPANT: I don't think it did.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

4 A PARTICIPANT: There would be
5 different between pregnant, and pregnant and
6 nursing.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about
8 including people other than pregnant women in the
9 advice. Do you like that, or not?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Well, I think if you
11 have some medical condition, that you're
12 sensitive to mercury, that you'd want to know
13 about it.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

15 A PARTICIPANT: It just somehow made me
16 think that it was safer.

17 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: It's like, well, okay,
19 it listed this one but not the others, then it
20 must be a secret.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So when we think
22 about which fish are high in mercury, from this

1 fish safe eating guideline, which ones would you
2 say?

3 A PARTICIPANT: Ocean fish. High in
4 mercury?

5 MS. HALVERSON: Ocean fish? Okay. And
6 how about low in mercury?

7 A PARTICIPANT: Fresh water.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Fresh water fish?

9 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm, you know,
10 raised, farm fish.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about other
12 kinds of fish that aren't listed here?

13 A PARTICIPANT: That makes me think
14 they just haven't got around to testing them yet.

15 (Laughter.)

16 (Simultaneous discussion.)

17 A PARTICIPANT: Maybe nothing, maybe
18 those other fish they don't mention here don't
19 have the volume in sales like the other fish do.

20 There are some exotic fishes out there
21 that only certain people would buy to eat them,
22 you know. It's like a puff fish, you know? Those

1 things are poison to begin with.

2 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Carol, you were
3 saying something, and I didn't hear it, about
4 fish low in mercury.

5 A PARTICIPANT: No, I only asked which
6 fish were high in mercury.

7 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. And
8 which fish are high in mercury to you?

9 A PARTICIPANT: Ocean fish.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. And how about
11 low in mercury?

12 A PARTICIPANT: Low in mercury,
13 American favorites. No mercury, the farm raised
14 fish.

15 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. And how about --

16 A PARTICIPANT: But what if you go out
17 to dinner, like, say, you can afford to go out
18 dinner once a week, and you want to have seafood,
19 you don't really know, you want to have something
20 other than flounder or scallops.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

22 A PARTICIPANT: You want something more

1 exotic.

2 MS. HALVERSON: All right. I am a
3 pregnant woman, and I love mahi-mahi.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Don't know. It's not
5 on here.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Can I order it?
7 Dr. Kathy, can I order this?

8 (Simultaneous discussion.)

9 A PARTICIPANT: -- like you know,
10 you're not sure if it's a fresh fish or an ocean
11 fish, and you don't know what category it falls
12 into.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

14 A PARTICIPANT: Or eat something that's
15 familiar.

16 (Laughter.)

17 A PARTICIPANT: Don't take a chance.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Uh-huh.

19 A PARTICIPANT: That's like ordering
20 something like this, or something like with Table
21 1 with a list of a number of different varieties.

22 A PARTICIPANT: But to do that, there's

1 over 3,000 different types of fish out there. You
2 could go to college and learn your fishes, I
3 guess.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Well, to be on the safe
5 side, I'd go ahead and pick from one of those --

6 A PARTICIPANT: One that you know.

7 A PARTICIPANT: -- yeah, right, that I
8 would know that would be okay rather than --

9 A PARTICIPANT: Now me, being a
10 pregnant woman, I could choose all those -- no, I
11 couldn't.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How do you think
13 you, personally, would factor this information
14 in, in any of these examples? How would you
15 factor that in, in terms of making decisions
16 about what fish to eat or not eat, from what
17 we've read today?

18 A PARTICIPANT: Even if you were not
19 pregnant, you would still not eat as much of the
20 high risk fishes.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

22 A PARTICIPANT: I've had swordfish

1 before --

2 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

3 A PARTICIPANT: -- well, I'm not
4 planning on having it again --

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: -- after --

7 MS. HALVERSON: Really?

8 A PARTICIPANT: -- fresh fish company
9 don't have their swordfish skewers.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, so even though it
11 hasn't said anything about non-pregnant women --

12 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

13 MS. HALVERSON: -- you would not eat
14 something off of that --

15 A PARTICIPANT: No, because I would
16 figure it wouldn't be healthy for a non-pregnant
17 person either.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, but it's like,
19 why would it apply to them and not to others? I
20 mean, it would harm us too. That's how I see it.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. How
22 about canned tuna?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Gee, I don't think I'm
2 going to eat tuna.

3 A PARTICIPANT: It's a tricky group. I
4 don't think canned tuna has --

5 (Simultaneous discussion.)

6 A PARTICIPANT: It wouldn't change it.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

9 A PARTICIPANT: I don't eat tuna all
10 that often anyhow, so for tuna, maybe have a tuna
11 sandwich once every two months.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How important do
13 you think it is for pregnant women to eat fish?

14 A PARTICIPANT: I don't think --

15 A PARTICIPANT: As far as vitamins and
16 minerals, that's something that's always to be
17 concerned about when one is pregnant.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Or maybe -- I'm sorry
19 --

20 A PARTICIPANT: Go ahead.

21 A PARTICIPANT: -- maybe it's not all
22 that important. There's other type of dietary

1 things out there, vitamins, beef, pork, different
2 types of other, and then you can also buy
3 vitamins over the counter. This will supply the
4 needed vitamins to do that. Because of that,
5 you'll avoid getting mercury in your body.

6 A PARTICIPANT: There are artificial
7 supplements you can take while you're pregnant.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Most pregnant women I
9 know, they have them on a type of vitamin anyway.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Now, let's look
11 at consumers more broadly, like those of us
12 around the table. I don't know about you, but I
13 heard when I was a kid, avoid bacon, because it
14 has carcinogens, or limit your intake of bacon,
15 limit your caffeine.

16 They kept saying, well, fish is good
17 for you. It's got all the good Omega-3 fatty
18 acids, and it's leaner, and now I hear all this
19 about mercury.

20 How do you factor that information into
21 your whole understanding of what the risks and
22 benefits are of eating something like fish?

1 A PARTICIPANT: I think eating anything
2 in moderation is okay.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Once you start
5 overeating too many eggs, you have your
6 cholesterol. You eat too many hamburgers, you
7 might get that mad cow disease. Anything in
8 moderation, even eating a can of tuna once a day
9 won't hurt you. You've got to everything in
10 moderation.

11 A PARTICIPANT: I would say in
12 moderation. Like I said, I hardly eat fish at
13 all.

14 (End side one; begin side two.)

15 MS. HALVERSON: Elizabeth?

16 A PARTICIPANT: I would rather eat fish
17 than meat.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

19 A PARTICIPANT: Just because of what I
20 heard recently, of how they were killing the
21 cows, and then using the scraps to feed the cows.
22 The cows were eating cows. Now you tell me there

1 was an epidemic, I don't what disease was going
2 on. It was in London, and --

3 A PARTICIPANT: Mad cow.

4 A PARTICIPANT: -- did you see that? I
5 just almost died, too, ugh. So I think fish
6 would be a safer way to go, but see, it's
7 expensive.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, Tim?

9 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I would also
10 weigh what other cultures eat. There's other
11 cultures besides the United States that eat a lot
12 of fish, and sometimes they tend to be healthier
13 than we are. They don't have the big beef
14 industry lobby, and chicken lobby. So I take it
15 all with a grain of salt.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

17 A PARTICIPANT: Saltwater fish.

18 A PARTICIPANT: If it's, I think,
19 within moderation, and if it's not much of a
20 concern that there are other vitamins in health
21 food stores out there, you know, supplements and
22 things like that --

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

2 A PARTICIPANT: -- that you can
3 substitute for that.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Based upon the
5 discussions that we've been having tonight, what
6 do you think is the most critical piece of
7 information that should be provided to consumers
8 about this whole topic?

9 A PARTICIPANT: Which fish to avoid.

10 MS. HALVERSON: Which fish to avoid?

11 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

12 MS. HALVERSON: Is that for everyone?
13 Or for pregnant women?

14 A PARTICIPANT: No. For pregnant
15 women, but for everyone, too.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

17 A PARTICIPANT: Because I don't eat
18 these kind of fish anyway, but now I won't.

19 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Do you think,
20 how about the rest of you, do you think it's more
21 important to emphasize those four fish to avoid,
22 or that pregnant women should be aware of this

1 issue? How about those two issues?

2 A PARTICIPANT: Well, I think it's kind
3 of unjust in a way, because it also mentions
4 tuna, and like what Tim says, the tuna industry
5 is so humongous that they're able to lobby all
6 this.

7 Now, you have these other four fishes,
8 and it's like, I know they're no good for you, in
9 a way, but nonetheless, they don't have the same
10 lobbying clout like the other ones do.

11 I think if that's the case, they should
12 put tuna somewhere and say, look, you know, this
13 is also very bad for you.

14 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about the
15 rest of you? Harry was saying the most important
16 message is, these four fish. Is that the most
17 important message to the rest of you, as well?

18 A PARTICIPANT: I think it's very
19 important, but I kind of think maybe the fact
20 that they want to target pregnant women, or to-
21 be-pregnant women, that type, because if, there
22 might be other fish that might affect them as

1 well.

2 These are definitely the ones to stay
3 away from, however, they need more concern than I
4 need, by the message I'm getting from here.

5 MS. HALVERSON: Okay.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

7 A PARTICIPANT: I don't know if you're
8 going to go there tonight or not, but how you're
9 get the information across. You have a little
10 can about this big. Are you going to put all
11 this on a little can with a big fish on it?

12 MS. HALVERSON: How should this
13 information get to consumers?

14 A PARTICIPANT: Gee. I think doctor's
15 offices.

16 MS. HALVERSON: Doctor's offices?
17 Okay.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Definitely.

19 A PARTICIPANT: That's true.

20 A PARTICIPANT: I think if somebody
21 puts it in the store.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Yes, so do I.

1 (Simultaneous discussion.)

2 A PARTICIPANT: Billboard.

3 MS. HALVERSON: Um-hmm.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Magazines,
5 publications.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. So,
7 let's see, Harry, so you're at Julia's Fish
8 Market, and she's got this big thing about
9 mercury in her fish. How do you feel about that?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Well, yeah, that's
11 true. Well, the wording would have to be careful,
12 of course.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. And how would --

14 A PARTICIPANT: I would still want to
15 tell pregnant women that these are high sources
16 of mercury, and even if you're not pregnant, you
17 can still see that they're high sources.

18 A PARTICIPANT: But you go to Julia's
19 Market, and the last six months, she's been stuck
20 with king fish in her cooler, she's certainly not
21 going to buy more.

22 (Laughter.)

1 A PARTICIPANT: It doesn't scare me
2 away as much to see something posted, though.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

4 A PARTICIPANT: I'd rather have some
5 discretion on it.

6 A PARTICIPANT: I was going to say,
7 even for some of the different restaurants around
8 the area, at least I would feel like, as a
9 customer, if I'm going in and paying for a
10 dinner, and paying that much money, I would want,
11 you know, I would feel like they are being honest
12 with me, that they care about what's going inside
13 your body. They want us to know if it's --

14 A PARTICIPANT: They want us to know
15 that information.

16 A PARTICIPANT: What about liquor? You
17 go to a liquor store, you know if you drink all
18 the liquors, it eventually will kill you, you
19 know what I mean? But you know, people still do
20 it.

21 Now what about a stupid old can of
22 tuna, I would probably buy it, you know.

1 A PARTICIPANT: If restaurants served
2 seafoods or different things like that, were
3 being shut down because of something like that
4 going on, then it would be like, wait a minute,
5 you know, if it was in the newspaper or on the
6 radio or something like that, then I'd think
7 twice.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, it's up to you to
9 decide.

10 MS. HALVERSON: I have another comment
11 here.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Yes.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Also, there's the whole
14 liability question if they know it might be bad
15 for you. Shouldn't, don't they have to tell you?

16 MS. HALVERSON: All right. I'd like to
17 ask you all to wait here. I'm going to run next
18 door and talk with my colleagues and see if there
19 is anything that I should have been asking you
20 that I've forgotten to ask you.

21 A PARTICIPANT: Is there a restroom
22 around here?

1 MS. HALVERSON: Yes. And the rest of
2 you, if you would pass around Example Three, then
3 Example Four, then Example Five, while I'm gone.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Can you get some fish
5 sticks?

6 (Laughter.)

7 MS. HALVERSON: Actually, I was going
8 to bring in lobster tamale.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, yes.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Sure, no problem.

11 (Moderator leaves the room.)

12 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, that's --

13 (Simultaneous discussion.)

14 A PARTICIPANT: I'll remember that.

15 A PARTICIPANT: No, it's been on the
16 news for 20 years about those tunas, you know.

17 A PARTICIPANT: I knew about them.

18 A PARTICIPANT: It's been so long I
19 forgot about it. I was at the age, I didn't care

20 --

21 A PARTICIPANT: I know.

22 A PARTICIPANT: I'm 40, you know.

1 A PARTICIPANT: I know, I'm 43, so I
2 can remember, you know, it was how babies were
3 being born --

4 A PARTICIPANT: I still eat tuna.

5 A PARTICIPANT: -- totally deformed,
6 yeah.

7 A PARTICIPANT: I eat a lot of tuna.

8 A PARTICIPANT: I like sword fish. I
9 go out to restaurants for that.

10 A PARTICIPANT: I'm only going to have
11 it once a year.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

14 A PARTICIPANT: I don't know. I don't
15 think the amount of that is significant, once or
16 twice, you know. I just think if it was a staple
17 diet of yours.

18 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

19 A PARTICIPANT: Just like they said,
20 though, anything to get you. I remember 20 years
21 ago them saying, don't eat this, or whatever, and
22 now, it's for vitamins. Twenty years ago they

1 were saying, don't do it, now they're saying, oh,
2 it's okay to do that. So it's like there's
3 always enough information.

4 A PARTICIPANT: Don't breathe the air;
5 don't drink the water.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, you know, it's
7 like pork was supposed to be bad for you.

8 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Back in the biblical
10 days, don't eat pork. It said in the bible. Eat
11 fish on Fridays.

12 A PARTICIPANT: I haven't heard that
13 for a long time.

14 A PARTICIPANT: So I don't know. All I
15 know is, I eat, I eat.

16 A PARTICIPANT: See food diet.

17 A PARTICIPANT: Well, this is
18 interesting, because now I can enlighten my
19 younger daughter, because she has children. I
20 have two girls and a son, and no one wants to let
21 me be a grandma.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Twenty-six and twenty.

1 But in case, I'll let her know about the fish.
2 It's important. If I would eat anything, I would
3 rather eat fish, so that's why this is really
4 interesting to me, if I could afford it. It's
5 just too expensive. That halibut is something
6 else.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Oh, no kidding.

8 A PARTICIPANT: All that other stuff
9 like sword fish and octopus, stuff, I'm just not
10 one to touch things like that. I'm not brave.

11 (Simultaneous discussion and laughter.)

12 (Moderator returns to room.)

13 MS. HALVERSON: I have a question, and
14 I'd like to exclude Ray and Harry from the
15 answers. How does mercury get into fish?

16 A PARTICIPANT: Through the
17 environment.

18 A PARTICIPANT: I would say through the
19 environment.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Probably from what the
21 eat.

22 MS. HALVERSON: From what they eat?

1 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

2 MS. HALVERSON: From the environment.

3 Where does the mercury come from?

4 A PARTICIPANT: Run offs?

5 MS. HALVERSON: The what?

6 A PARTICIPANT: Run offs from industry.

7 A PARTICIPANT: Umm.

8 MS. HALVERSON: Just a minute, Ray,

9 just a minute, Harry, just a minute.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Chemical plants.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Chemical plants.

12 Run off.

13 A PARTICIPANT: Or was it always there?

14 A PARTICIPANT: Chemical plants,

15 industries, that's what I see.

16 A PARTICIPANT: Fish that have it

17 deteriorate.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Pardon?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Fish that have it

20 deteriorate.

21 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right, Ray,

22 Harry, anything?

1 A PARTICIPANT: It comes from the salt
2 in the ocean.

3 MS. HALVERSON: The salt in the ocean?

4 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, it's a naturally
5 occurring thing.

6 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

7 A PARTICIPANT: But unless it comes
8 from -- mercury is used as a solvent for
9 different things, and if you don't collect all
10 your solvent back, you know, some of it leaks
11 through the filtering system.

12 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

13 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How would you
14 reduce mercury in fish? It's obviously a
15 problem.

16 A PARTICIPANT: You'd have to stop the
17 source, and then you'd have to catch all the fish
18 that have it.

19 (Simultaneous discussion.)

20 MS. HALVERSON: Okay, hold on, one at a
21 time.

22 A PARTICIPANT: Is when you, there's no

1 way you can really reduce it, in my opinion.
2 There are certain ways you can do it to minimize
3 or maybe lower it somewhat, but it always will
4 still be present in fish. I think when you
5 process the fish, that's when you have to remove
6 it, unless it's absorbed into body fat or
7 whatever, I guess --

8 A PARTICIPANT: Water soluble.

9 A PARTICIPANT: -- yeah.

10 A PARTICIPANT: Like the canned tuna
11 had far less in it --

12 A PARTICIPANT: Right. Processing.

13 A PARTICIPANT: -- than fresh or
14 frozen, so there has to be something in the
15 processing.

16 A PARTICIPANT: And the other fish,
17 like sword fish and so forth, don't you eat big
18 pieces of it?

19 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

20 A PARTICIPANT: Filet.

21 A PARTICIPANT: So it's not like ground
22 up, you know. But I really don't know.

1 A PARTICIPANT: I would think, like, up
2 in Alaska, and just think about fish hatcheries
3 or things like that, before they ship it out to
4 the restaurant, whatever, I would think that
5 there would be a process of elimination, if, you
6 know, I don't know, if you catch it.

7 You know that it has mercury in it
8 ahead of time, and there is a process of going
9 through it to get rid of it, or something to do,
10 then --

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. Where would you
12 think you would find more mercury? In commercial
13 fish or fish that you would catch yourself.

14 A PARTICIPANT: If you caught it in the
15 wrong stream, you could get a real big dose, like
16 if you caught it just downstream from a mine
17 that's leaking, you'd get a big dose that way.

18 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So how do you,
19 as a consumer, decide, this is pretty safe fish
20 to eat; maybe I shouldn't eat this stuff? How do
21 you decide that?

22 A PARTICIPANT: It's a chance you take.

1 A PARTICIPANT: You don't worry. You
2 just rely on, you have to rely on the --

3 A PARTICIPANT: I guess you could take
4 a tester with you and put the fish in it, see how
5 much, oh, 14%, throw it away.

6 (Laughter.)

7 A PARTICIPANT: We're hoping the FDA
8 will do that for us.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Right.

10 (Simultaneous discussion.)

11 MS. HALVERSON: So, in terms of trying
12 to decide, as a pregnant woman, how much fish you
13 can eat, let's say you really liked fish, it was
14 your major source of protein, how would you
15 decide how much tuna to eat, how much of this
16 low-in-mercury, how much of the high-in-mercury?
17 How would you make decisions about how much of
18 each of those to eat?

19 A PARTICIPANT: I would need more
20 information on it. I don't think what we saw
21 tonight gives you enough to really base your diet
22 on, or to not have it, actually.

1 I don't know, more, again, just more
2 information, whether it's at the store, or if
3 there's a push in a magazine or something for it.

4 A PARTICIPANT: I would probably want
5 more symptoms as to, you know, like a cold or
6 something like that, in regard to symptoms like
7 that, as to warning things to look for, something
8 like that.

9 A PARTICIPANT: Once you start
10 experiencing mercury poisoning symptoms, it's
11 pretty late.

12 MS. HALVERSON: One of the things that
13 is happening is that EPA is trying to regulate
14 the amount of smoke stack emissions, because
15 apparently a lot of mercury in the atmosphere
16 comes from that. So that's one thing that's
17 going on.

18 In terms of how you personally use that
19 information, that's what they're trying to get
20 at, how they provide it to you so that you can
21 make wise choices in what you eat.

22 A PARTICIPANT: I would be nice to know

1 specific amounts in each type of fish.

2 A PARTICIPANT: How much in an
3 eight-ounce fish?

4 MS. HALVERSON: How much is an
5 eight-ounce serving? Show me with your hands how
6 much. On the count of three, everybody put your
7 hands up with an eight-ounce serving. One, two
8 three.

9 (Simultaneous discussion.)

10 MS. HALVERSON: When they say
11 eight-ounce serving, does that mean something to
12 you? Like when you go, let's say you go to Red
13 Lobster, and you order sword fish, one of our
14 four on the list there. What's an eight-ounce
15 serving of sword fish? Is that what they serve
16 you?

17 A PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I think --

18 (Simultaneous discussion.)

19 A PARTICIPANT: Is that before cooked
20 weight?

21 A PARTICIPANT: I worked in a
22 restaurant. They weigh it before.

1 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. So a six-ounce
2 -- do they tell you, is it pre-cooked weight in a
3 restaurant? Do they tell you that?

4 A PARTICIPANT: No. It's always pre-
5 cooked weight.

6 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. How about three
7 ounces of tuna fish? How much is that?

8 A PARTICIPANT: One small can.

9 MS. HALVERSON: A small can?

10 A PARTICIPANT: Um-hmm.

11 MS. HALVERSON: Okay. All right. I
12 want to thank all of you for being here, and
13 please feel free to pick up all your fish out
14 there.

15 (Laughter.)

16 A PARTICIPANT: (Indiscernible) lobster
17 tamale.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MS. HALVERSON: And you did a great job
20 of collecting all my things. I appreciate that.
21 Yes, thank you for the tuna.

22 (Simultaneous discussion.)

1 MS. HALVERSON: If you go out to the
2 front, I think they have something for you there.

3 A PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

4 MS. HALVERSON: Thank you.

5 A PARTICIPANT: Well, we'll be talking
6 about this for awhile at home.

7 (Simultaneous discussion.)

8 A PARTICIPANT: It's all about
9 pregnancy.

10 A PARTICIPANT: It's all about mercury.

11 (Whereupon the taping was concluded.)

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