

Ask Leyla: Is it safe to cook with aluminum?



Q: My family has been incorporating wild Alaskan salmon into our diets regularly. We cook them either in the oven or on the grill in aluminum foil. Is it healthy and safe to cook in aluminum foil?

A: I don't recommend cooking in aluminum foil for the following reasons:

The aluminum in foil can leach into foods while cooking. It is especially not recommended for cooking tomato products, citrus, or spices. This includes aluminum pots that haven't been anodized as well as cooking utensils (for tomato and citrus products, primarily). Use stainless steel instead.

While aluminum occurs naturally in air, soil, and water, the mining of aluminum releases it into the atmosphere and rain washes it away into our aquifers and water supply. Inhaling aluminum vapors from occupational exposure or cigarette smoke is absorbed into our brains and bones, causing oxidative stress and inflammation. Long known as a neurotoxin, however, the link between aluminum and Alzheimer's disease is still controversial, but it's best to limit exposure whenever possible.

Even though we only absorb as little as one percent of the aluminum we ingest, we do absorb it through our skin in products such as antiperspirants, lotions, shampoos, and sunscreens that contain it. Aluminum overload can impair the ability to detoxify by inhibiting the production of glutathione.

Aluminum is also contained in our foods such as baking powder, baked and processed foods, coloring and caking agents, pesticides on our produce, coffee creamers, and baby formula (yikes!) as well as over-the-counter drugs such as antacids and NSAIDs. Aluminum has replaced mercury in many vaccines and is also used as an adjuvant.

Here's a link for more information on aluminum.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin has clients all over the country via telephone consultations. No need to travel to New York City for a nutrition consult at the Hoffman Center. Should you require her services, please call our office to set up an appointment: (212) 779-1744.