

# Low Iodine Diet

## NORMAL FUNCTION OF THE THYROID GLAND

Your thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland located in the lower front of your neck. The job of your thyroid gland is to make thyroid hormones. Thyroid hormones are released into your blood and carried to every tissue in your body. Thyroid hormones help your body use energy, stay warm and keep your brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working normally.

## LOW IODINE DIET OVERVIEW

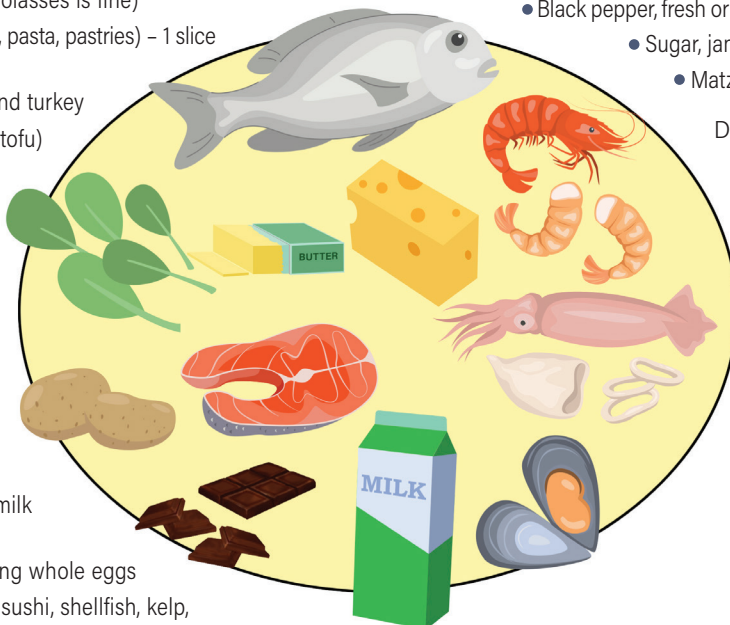
To help the radio-active iodine treatment work better for thyroid cancer, you will be asked to follow a low iodine diet. Iodine is found in many foods.

### WHILE ON A LOW IODINE DIET, YOU SHOULD AVOID (NOT EAT):

- Foods containing iodized salt, sea salt, iodates, iodides, or algin
- Vitamins or supplements that contain iodine (especially kelp and dulse)
- Commercially prepared bakery products that are made with iodate dough conditioners
- FD&C red dye #3 – this appears in maraschino cherries and occasionally as a pink/red artificial color in beverages, cereals, candies, and vitamins
- Blackstrap Molasses (unsulfured molasses is fine)
- Limited grain products (e.g., noodles, pasta, pastries) – 1 slice bread, ½ cup pasta daily
- Limited amounts of beef, chicken and turkey
- Soy products (soy sauce, soy milk, tofu)  
[note: *soy itself does not contain iodine, although some soy product might. Additionally, high soy ingestion has been shown to interfere with radioactive iodine uptake in animal studies.*]

### ONLY EAT A SMALL AMOUNT OF THESE FOODS:

- Iodized salt
- Dairy products or foods containing dairy products including milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt, butter and milk chocolate
- Eggs, egg yolks and foods containing whole eggs
- Foods from the sea (including fish, sushi, shellfish, kelp, and seaweed)
- Foods that contain additives carrageen, agar-agar, alginate, or nori



Limit intake of these food sources.

## FOODS THAT ARE OK

- Non-iodized salt may be used as desired
- Egg whites
- Homemade bread made with non-iodized salt and oil (not soy!) instead of butter or milk or commercially-baked breads which do not contain iodate dough conditioners, dairy, or eggs
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Frozen vegetables
- Grain, cereal products and pasta without high iodine ingredients
- Canned fruit
- Natural unsalted nuts and nut butters (peanut, almond, etc.)
- Sodas, beer, wine, lemonade, fruit juices
- Coffee or tea. But remember, no milk or cream and no soy-based non-dairy creamer
- Popcorn popped in vegetable oil or air popped, with non-iodized salt
- Black pepper, fresh or dried herbs and spices, all vegetable oils
- Sugar, jam, jelly, honey maple syrup
- Matzoh crackers



Detailed recipes that follow a low iodine diet can be found on the following websites:

[www.checkyourneck.com](http://www.checkyourneck.com)  
(Light of Life Foundation)  
and [www.thyca.org](http://www.thyca.org)  
(ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association).

The following page provides general guidelines to follow on this diet.

# LOW IODINE DIET

## SAMPLE MENU ITEMS

### BREAKFAST

- Any fruit or fruit juices
- Eggbeaters
- Oatmeal with toppings – cinnamon, honey, applesauce, maple syrup, walnuts, fruit
- 1 slice toast
- Black coffee or tea

### LUNCH

- Vegetarian or chicken with rice soup
- Matzo crackers
- White or brown rice with vegetable plate (fresh or frozen)
- Salad – fruit or vegetable – oil and vinegar dressing
- Fruits – fresh, frozen or canned
- Black coffee or tea

### DINNER

- 6 oz Roast beef, lamb, veal, pork, soup or turkey
- Potato – baked or broiled
- Vegetables (fresh or frozen)
- Salad – fruit or vegetable – oil and vinegar dressing
- Fruits
- Black coffee or tea

### SNACKS

- Fresh fruit or juice
- Dried fruits such as raisins
- Fresh raw vegetables
- Applesauce
- Unsalted nuts
- Fruit juice
- Unsalted peanut butter (great with apple slices, carrot sticks, crackers or rice cakes)
- Matzoh and other unsalted crackers
- Home-made bread and muffins

### ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Avoid restaurant foods, and especially meals from fast food restaurants, since there is no reasonable way to determine which restaurants use iodized salt.
- Consult your doctor before discontinuing any red-colored medication or any medication containing iodine (i.e., amiodarone, expectorants, topical antiseptics).
- Avoid all herbal supplements (especially when one is not sure how much iodine they contain).

