

UPDATED: May 2014

Low Iodine Diet

The purpose of a Low Iodine Diet is to reduce the stores of iodine in your body. This will help increase the success of your radioactive iodine test or treatment. If you don't follow this diet, you may change the results of the radioactive uptake test, thyroid scan findings, and how your doctor will plan your treatment. You will be asked to follow the low iodine diet for 7-14 days before treatment or scan. You will stay on the diet for 1-2 days after your treatment or scan.

The low-iodine diet limits your iodine uptake to ~50 micrograms per day. Avoid foods high in iodine (over 20 micrograms per serving). You may eat foods that are low in iodine (up to 5 micrograms per serving). Limit foods that have a moderate level of iodine (5-20 micrograms per serving). As a general rule, eat fresh, home-made foods and have fruits and vegetables on hand. Add flavor to foods by using fresh or dried herbs, salt-free spice mixes, or vinegars.

AVOID THESE FOODS:

- Iodized SALT, sea salt, and any foods that have iodized salt and sea salt (onion salt, garlic salt). Some food items that may contain these include: chips, crackers, pretzels, ketchup, bottled salad dressing, bouillon cubes, frozen dinners, canned vegetables, packaged dinners, and seasonings with added salt.
- Sea vegetables: SEAWEED, kelp, miso soup, nori, agar-agar, carrageenan, seaweed tablets
- Seafood: fresh and salt-water fish, shellfish, sushi (i.e. NO COD, Fish sticks, Shrimp)
- Dairy Products: MILK, Cheese, cream, yogurt, butter, ice cream, sour cream, whey, casein, creamer
- Margarine
- EGG Yolks, whole eggs, or foods containing whole eggs/egg yolks (egg whites are OK)
- Cured and Corned foods: Ham, corned beef, sausage, lunch meats, sauerkraut, pickles
- BREAD products which contain iodate that contain preservatives to prevent staleness
- Most Chocolate (due to milk content). Cocoa powders and some dark chocolates are allowed
- Red Dye #3: Avoid red, orange, brown processed foods, cereals, candies, vitamins, and red velvet cake is rich in iodine. Red dye is often used in restaurant foods.
- Some molasses (if sulfured, such as blackstrap molasses). Unsulfured molasses which is more common, is allowed
- Soybeans and soy products such as tofu, TVP, soy milk, soy sauce. Other beans to avoid include: red kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, and cowpeas.
- Rhubarb, Strawberries, and POTATO SKINS (inside of potato is fine)
- Iodine-containing vitamins and food supplements
- If you're taking a medication containing iodine, check with your physician (due to red food dye & erythrosine)
- Avoid restaurant foods and processed foods (Eat Fresh!)
- Canned vegetables

- Store-bought white bread
- Limited Rice (Basmati)
- Fresh chicken/turkey WITH broth or additives injected into it

In capital letters are some of the highest iodine content

ALLOWED FOODS and INGREDIENTS:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables – (except rhubarb & maraschino cherries) -Eat raw or frozen without added salt
- Unsalted nuts and unsalted nut butters
- Egg whites
- Fresh meats (up to 6oz per day of beef, chicken, or pork)
- Grain, cereal, and pasta products that contain no high-iodine ingredients
- Sugar, jelly, jam, natural honey, maple syrup
- Black pepper, fresh or dried herbs and spices
- Vegetable oil
- Dark Chocolate (without salt/dairy/soy)
- Juice (100% Juice – NOT fruit punch), tea (loose or bagged), coffee (ground or instant freeze-dried), soda, and other unsalted carbonated drinks without red dye. ***Use only non-dairy creamer!
- Homemade bread made with non-iodized salt and oil instead of butter and milk
- Canned peaches, pears, and pineapples
- Natural unsalted peanut butter
- Popcorn popped in vegetable oil or air popped, with non-iodized salt
- Oatmeal toppings: cinnamon, honey, applesauce, maple syrup & walnuts, fruit
- Salad topped with grilled chicken or beef, oil and vinegar dressing
- “Sandwich” with Matzo crackers, plain peanut butter, and jelly

Easy Quick Meals:

Breakfast #1: Orange Juice, Oatmeal, Sweet Butter, Sugar, Brewed Coffee

#2: Cooked oat bran, Sugar, Apple, and Orange

#3: 1 slice of Toast with natural jam/honey, cream of wheat, fresh fruit

Lunch #1: Roast Beef (or Turkey), noodles, green beans, fresh apple, sweet butter, graham Crackers

#2: Baked Potato, 3 oz. pork, apple, and orange

#3: Homemade vegetable soup, salad with homemade oil and vinegar dressing

Dinner #1: Lettuce, oil and vinegar, fresh pork, baked potato, fresh broccoli, sweet butter

#2: 3-4oz. fresh poultry, roast beef, lamb, veal, pork, Pasta (no salt or eggs) with homemade tomato sauce (sauce made from fresh tomatoes – not canned), fresh vegetable, coffee, tea, or 100% fruit juice

Snacks: Applesauce, Carrot or celery sticks, Homemade low-iodine bread or muffins, apple slices with unsalted peanut butter, real fruit popsicles or natural sorbets, Unsalted Matzo crackers, Popcorn, Fresh fruit

To download a free, low-iodine cookbook visit the following websites:

Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc: www.thyca.org

Light of Life Foundation: www.checkyourneck.com

If you are a UW Health patient and need more information, please contact UW Health Nutrition Clinic at:

University Station – (608) 263-5012
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