



The Low-Iodine Diet

*When Preparing to Receive Radioactive Iodine
for a Thyroid Cancer Test or Treatment*

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and other ThyCa volunteers

ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc.

From information from ThyCa medical advisors and conference speakers.

www.thyca.org

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Why do I *need* to do this diet?

- ▶ Thyroid tissue and thyroid cancer tissue “suck up” iodine.
- ▶ If you eat your usual diet, your thyroid and thyroid cancer tissue will have “resident” iodine.
- ▶ You need to go on a low-iodine diet (LID) to reduce the amount of resident iodine.
- ▶ This makes you “iodine hungry” and the day you swallow your radioactive iodine tracer or treatment dose, the radioiodine will be more effective.
- ▶ If you do not follow the diet, your “resident iodine” will make it more difficult for the radioactive iodine to get into your thyroid and thyroid cancer tissue.

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Why do I *want* to do this diet?

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- Some of us find the diet difficult to follow.
- We can't have some of the foods we like.
 - We can't use conveniences like “fast food.” We have to be careful if we eat out, or if friends give us a casserole or other food.
- Why should I *want* to do this diet?
 - Control! In a time in your life when so much seems out of your control, here's a part of the testing or treatment that YOU can do!

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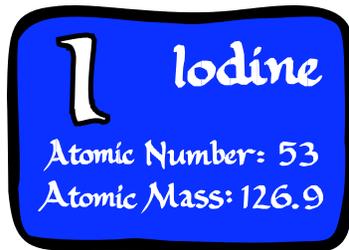
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Do I eat some iodine while I'm on the diet?

- ▶ Yes. Very tiny amounts. This is a LOW-iodine diet. It's NOT a "NO"-iodine diet.
- ▶ It's important to stay on the diet! Your goal is fewer than 50 micrograms of iodine per day.
- ▶ Do the diet for the time your doctor advises before you swallow the radioactive iodine. Some people choose to add a few days.
 - This gives you a few days to get used to the diet
 - Follow the diet carefully for the prescribed time. Typically 1 to 2 weeks, but listen to your doctor!
- ▶ Plan ahead so you don't eat something you shouldn't.

How can I remember??

- Label what you can have.
- Put a list on the cupboard, refrigerator, or both.
(one-page list in ThyCa's Free Cookbook)
- Put what you can't have in the back of the refrigerator or in a high cupboard.
- Wear a reminder or change your wrist bracelet to your other arm



Read
the
label

Can I have salt?

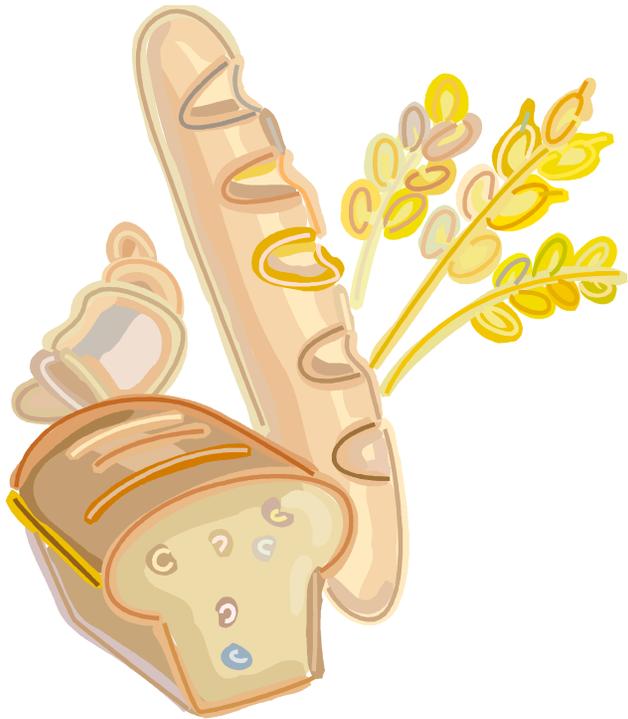


**O.K. If not iodized,
and not from the sea.**

**MAYBE, if kosher.
READ THE LABEL.
Some kosher salt
is iodized.**

~~**NO, if it's iodized,
or is sea salt.
Read the label.**~~

Can I have bread?



- Yes, if you bake it yourself and use a low-iodine recipe.
- Maybe, if it's from the grocery store. Read the label.
- If you are looking for bread substitutes, try Matzos.



Why can't I have some kinds of commercially baked bread?

Some bread and baked goods prepared outside your home in industrial facilities have an ingredient called a “dough conditioner,” which may contain iodine.

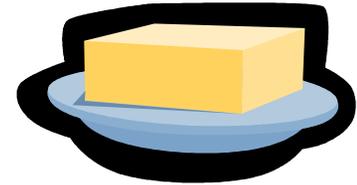
- Some commercial food preparation equipment is cleaned with iodine-based products
- Plus, some bread has salt, and sometimes it's iodized salt.

What about chocolate?

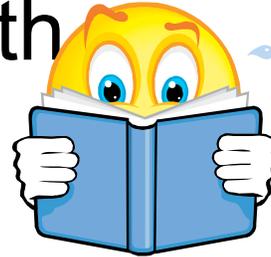
- Some chocolate is okay. Some is not okay.
- The reason you must avoid some chocolate is that it contains milk or milk fat.
- However, you can bake many chocolate goodies using milk-free chocolate ingredients.
 - Plain cocoa and plain dark chocolate are examples. Read the label!



I know I can't have butter...but why can't I have margarine?



- Most margarines contain some form of milk product, salt, or both



- Read the label.

- If you want a salty flavor, let a stick of margarine soften, stir in one half teaspoon noniodized salt, and put it back into the refrigerator.

- Or, olive oil makes an easy substitute for butter or margarine.

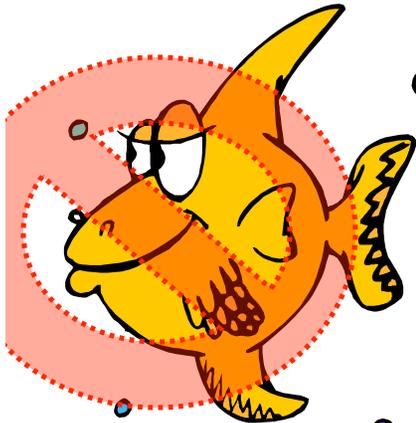
The Details – Foods to avoid

- ▶ Avoid iodized salt, sea salt, and salty foods.



- You must assume that restaurants use iodized salt. So if you eat out, eat only simple things like orange juice and the inside of a plain baked potato.

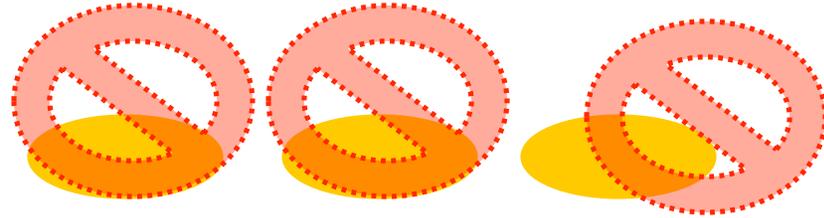
- ▶ Avoid dairy products (milk, sour cream, cheese, cream, yogurt, butter, ice cream). Very tiny amounts (like a teaspoon or tablespoon per day) are allowed on some diets from thyroid cancer treatment centers.



- ▶ Avoid seafood and any product from the sea (fish or shellfish. Also seaweed, kelp, contain carrageen, agar-agar, nori, algin, or alginate — all of these are made from seaweed.)

The Details, continued...foods to avoid

- Avoid egg yolks

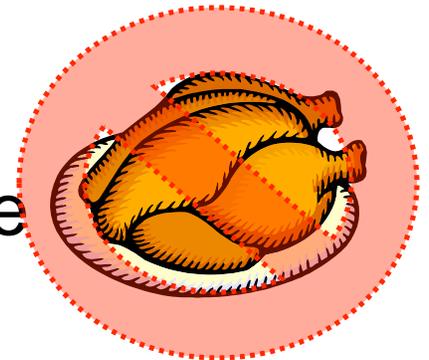


- Egg whites are fine to eat! Some diets allow a packaged food containing egg if the label does not list egg in the top 3 ingredients.

- Avoid cured meats like ham, bacon, sausage, corned beef, unless you're sure that the salt is not iodized or sea salt.



- Avoid fresh chicken or turkey that has injected broth or other additives. These usually contain salt.



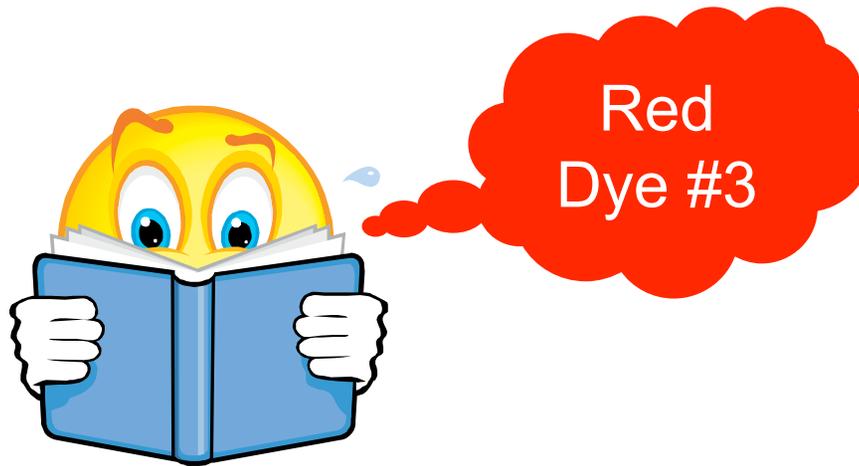
The Details, continued...

- Avoid some molasses (the concentrated bitter blackstrap or sulfured molasses). It's okay to eat the common sweet unsulfured molasses. Brown sugar is okay also.
- Avoid most soy products (soy sauce, soy milk, tofu)
 - Soybean oil and soy lecithin are safe
- Avoid vitamins or supplements that contain iodine. Many multivitamin/mineral preparations contain iodine. Some patients choose to stop taking vitamins while on the diet.



The Details, continued...

- Be sure to ask your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- Avoid FD&C Red Dye #3: Used in food, medicines, some soft drinks
 - If the label just says “red dye” or “dye” and the food is artificially colored red, pink, orange, or brown, it’s best to avoid it.

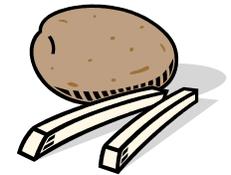


What about these foods?

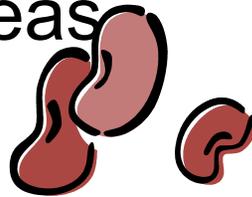
- Rhubarb? The diet from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) says to avoid it. That may be because the type contained in a herbal tea is advertised as being a good source of iodine.



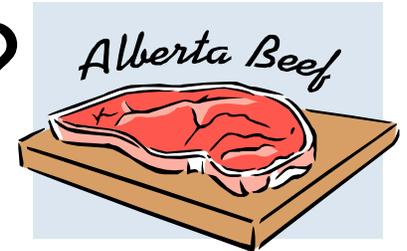
- ▶ Potatoes? The skins should be avoided, according to NIH; the inside of the potato is fine.



- ▶ Beans? Avoid soybeans and their products like tofu. The NIH diet also says to avoid red kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, and cowpeas.



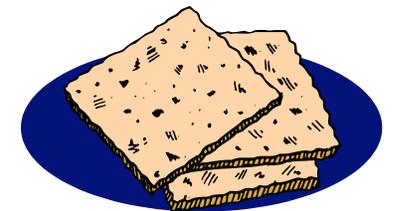
So, what can I eat??



- ▶ Egg whites are fine to eat.
- ▶ Fresh non-cured meat from the butcher; up to 5-6 ounces per day. A 3-ounce serving is the size of a deck of cards.
- ▶ Grains and cereals and breads, up to 4 servings per day. A serving is one slice of bread or one-half cup uncooked oatmeal.
- ▶ Matzo. Also homemade bread made with non-iodized salt and oil instead of butter or milk. Some commercial breads are okay—read the label.



- ▶ And there's more



So, what else can I eat?



- ▶ Fresh fruits and vegetables, washed well. Also frozen vegetables that don't have salt or other high-iodine ingredients added:

- Be careful about frozen peas. Most have salt added



- ▶ Canned peaches, pears, pineapples, and other fruit.



- ▶ Unsalted peanut butter and other nut butters. Some people like to put it in a food processor, add a half teaspoon noniodized salt, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil and 2 tablespoons of white sugar.



So, what else can I eat?

- Coffee or tea, if non-instant (due to preservative in some instant brands)
- Popcorn popped in vegetable oil or air popped
 - Use non-iodized salt
- Unsalted nuts
- Some baby foods
- More on the next page



And, what else can I eat?

- Sugar, jelly, jam, honey, real maple syrup
- Fresh and dried herbs
- Black pepper
- Vegetable oils
- Vinegar
- Clear soda, diet soda, lemonade (not pink lemonade)



And, what else can I eat?



- ▶ Beer, wine, other alcohol
 - Avoid cooking wines, because they contain salt.
- ▶ Homemade foods. Eliminate or substitute ingredients in your own favorite recipes.
- ▶ Use the FREE ***ThyCa Low-Iodine Cookbook.***



It has more than 250 tasty recipes from more than 100 ThyCa volunteers, plus snack and meal ideas and other tips. Expanded 7th edition coming soon.

Download the cookbook at
www.thyca.org





Final Tip – Plan Ahead

- Bake bread and make rolls from the same recipe and freeze them.
- Have some natural peanut butter on hand.
- Keep jelly in the house.
- Buy Matzos.
- Make homemade chicken broth and freeze it.
- Stock up on pasta and frozen vegetables.
- Buy non-iodized salt.
 - EMPTY ALL YOUR SALT SHAKERS AND REPLACE WITH SAFE SALT!!
- Shop the perimeter of the store...fresh fruits, vegetables, safe cuts of meat.



For more information and the
FREE Low-Iodine Cookbook, visit

www.thyca.org

Thank You