

Low-Iodine Diet Guidelines — Summary

ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc.SM

For details, and our **free downloadable Low-Iodine Cookbook**, visit www.thyca.org

Key Points

- This is a Low-Iodine Diet, NOT a No-Iodine Diet or an Iodine-Free Diet.
- The diet is for a short time period, usually for the 2 weeks (14 days) before a radioactive iodine scan or radioactive iodine treatment.
- Avoid foods high in iodine (over 20 mcg per serving). Eat any foods low in iodine (up to 5 mcg per serving). Limit the quantity of foods moderate in iodine (5 to 20 mcg per serving).
- Read the ingredient lists on the labels of packaged foods. Check with your physician about medications you are taking.

Not Allowed—

Avoid These Foods and Ingredients

- Iodized salt, sea salt, and any foods containing iodized salt and sea salt.
- Seafood and sea products (fish, shellfish, seaweed, seaweed tablets, carrageenan, agar-agar, alginate, nori and other sea-based foods or ingredients).
- Dairy products of any kind (milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream).
- Egg yolks or whole eggs or foods containing whole eggs.
- Bakery products containing iodine/iodate dough conditioners or high-iodine ingredients. Low-iodine homemade and commercial baked goods are fine.
- Red Dye #3.
- Most Chocolate (due to milk content). Cocoa powder and some dark chocolates are allowed.
- Some molasses (if sulfured, such as blackstrap molasses). Unsulfured molasses, which is more common, is okay. Sulfur is a term used on labels and does not relate to iodine.
- Soybeans and soybean products such as tofu, TVP, soy milk, soy sauce. The NIH diet says to avoid some other beans: red kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, and cowpeas.
- On some diets, rhubarb and potato skins (inside of the potato is fine).
- Iodine-containing vitamins and food supplements.
- If you're taking a medication containing iodine, check with your physician.

Allowed Foods and Ingredients

- Fruits except rhubarb and maraschino cherries (with Red Dye #3).
- Vegetables: preferably raw or frozen without salt, except soybeans and (according to NIH diet) a few other beans.
- Unsalted nuts and unsalted nut butters.
- Whites of eggs.
- Fresh meats up to 6 ounces a day.
- Grain and cereal products up to 4 servings per day, provided they have no high-iodine ingredients.
- Pasta, provided it has no high-iodine ingredients.
- Sugar, jelly, jam, honey, maple syrup.
- Black pepper, fresh or dried herbs and spices.
- Oils. All vegetable oils, including soy oil.
- Sodas (except with Red Dye #3), cola, diet cola, non-instant coffee, non-instant tea, beer, wine, other alcoholic beverages, lemonade, fruit juices.
- **Read the ingredient list on all packaged foods.**

Easy Snacks for Home, Work, or Travel

- Fresh fruit or juice
- Dried fruits such as raisins
- Fresh raw vegetables
- Applesauce
- Popcorn
- Unsalted nuts
- Sodas other than those with Red Dye #3
- Fruit juice
- Unsalted peanut butter or other nut butters (great with apple slices, carrot sticks, crackers, and rice cakes)
- Unsalted Matzo crackers and other unsalted crackers
- Homemade low-iodine bread or muffins

- Easy Quick Meals**
- Oatmeal toppings-cinnamon, honey, applesauce, maple syrup and walnuts, fruit
 - Grilled fresh meat, vegetables, fresh fruit or baked apple
 - Salad topped with grilled chicken or beef, oil and vinegar dressing
 - "Sandwich" with Matzo crackers, plain peanut butter, jelly

Our thanks to ThyCa's medical advisors and conference speakers for information and support.

Disclaimer: This information is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended, nor should it be interpreted, as medical advice or directions of any kind. Any person viewing this information is strongly advised to consult their own medical doctor(s) for all matters involving their health and medical care.