Low-Iodine Diet

Iodine is an essential nutrient that is often added to salt. Iodized salt is the largest source of iodine in the typical diet. Iodine may also be found in dairy products, fish, processed meats, pudding mixes, candies, frozen dinners, red food coloring, fast foods, and foods with artificial colorings.

Why Do I Need a Low-Iodine Diet?

If you are scheduled for a radioactive immunoassay test or a thyroid ablation, you must follow a low-iodine diet for one week before and two days after the treatment. Controlling the amount of iodine you eat helps makes the test more accurate and the treatment more successful.

Food Choices

When following a low-iodine diet, avoid iodized salt and multivitamins with iodine. You may use noniodized salt. Foods should be homemade, not ordered from restaurants, delis, or other outlets for prepared foods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Foods Allowed</th>
<th>High-Iodine Foods to Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grain foods</td>
<td>• Plain rice • Pasta without added salt or eggs • 1 or 2 slices of bread per</td>
<td>• Egg noodles • Packaged rice and pasta mixes • Ready-to-eat cereals (except shredded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>day • Cooked (not instant) cereals with no added salt • Shredded wheat •</td>
<td>wheat and puffed rice) • Instant hot cereals • Pastries and cookies • Cakes, pies,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puffed rice cereal • Popcorn popped with vegetable or olive oil and noniodized</td>
<td>and other baked goods containing iodated conditioners • Pretzels, crackers, and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>salt • Salt-free rice cakes</td>
<td>snack chips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>• All plain fresh vegetables except spinach</td>
<td>• Canned or frozen vegetables • Canned or bottled vegetable juices • Spinach • Vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with sauces • Pickles, olives, and sauerkraut • Canned or bottled tomato or pasta sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Instant mashed potatoes • Frozen onion rings • French fries • Soy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>• Fresh fruit • Fresh or bottled fruit juices</td>
<td>• Canned or dried fruit • Canned fruit juices • Fruit cocktail</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Continues
### Foods Allowed and Foods to Avoid on a Low-Iodine Diet

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
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<th>High-Iodine Foods to Avoid</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk and dairy foods</td>
<td>• None</td>
<td>• All milk and dairy foods, including ice cream, cheese, milk, pudding, yogurt, cottage cheese, eggnog, and sour cream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Meats and other high-protein foods | • Fresh meat and poultry that has not been injected with flavorings or other ingredients  
• Unsalted peanut butter  
• Unsalted nuts | • All fish and seafood  
• Cured meats  
• Luncheon meats  
• Bacon, ham, and sausage  
• Chipped beef  
• Hot dogs  
• Liver  
• Eggs and egg substitutes (a small amount of egg used in cooking is allowed)  
• Dried beans and peas  
• Salted peanut butter  
• Salted nuts |
| Oils and fats | • Vegetable oil  
• Olive oil  
• Unsalted margarine and butter | • Butter and margarine  
• Commercial salad dressings  
• Mayonnaise |
| Beverages | • Coffee  
• Tea  
• Lemon-lime soda  
• Homemade lemonade  
• Water | • Instant drink mixes, including cocoa, lemonade, Kool-Aid, and iced tea  
• Beer  
• Mineral water with sodium  
• Fruit drinks (like Hi-C) |

Continues
### Foods Allowed and Foods to Avoid on a Low-Iodine Diet

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<tr>
<td>Other foods</td>
<td>• Natural sorbet with no coloring</td>
<td>• Iodized salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Herbs and spices with no added salt</td>
<td>• Potato chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Noniodized salt</td>
<td>• Meat tenderizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jam, honey, and pure maple syrup</td>
<td>• All condiments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nondairy creamer</td>
<td>• Bouillon</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Canned soups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foods containing red dye</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Restaurant foods</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foods containing carrageen, agar-agar, algin, or alginate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample 1-Day Menu

Note: All foods on this menu should be prepared and cooked without iodized salt.

**Breakfast**

- Fresh fruit juice
- 1 or 2 slices of toast with honey or fruit jam
- Oatmeal with honey or jam
- Coffee or tea

**Lunch**

- Homemade soup
- 3 to 4 ounces grilled, baked, or roasted fresh meat or poultry
- Fresh vegetables
- Plain rice
- Salad with homemade dressing
- Coffee or tea

**Dinner**

- 3 to 4 ounces grilled, baked, or roasted fresh meat or poultry
- Fresh vegetables
- Plain baked potato seasoned with pepper and lemon juice
- Salad with homemade dressing
- Coffee or tea

**Snacks**

- Fresh fruit
- Fresh raw vegetables
- Homemade popcorn
- Rice cakes with unsalted peanut butter
- Sorbet with no added coloring