



# Low-Iodine Diet

## *Planning ahead*

**This handout tells you what foods you may and may not eat while you are on a low-iodine diet.**

**Follow this diet for as long as your doctor tells you to.**

**These are guidelines only. It is best to talk about your specific dietary needs with a dietitian or diet technician.**

Your doctor has ordered a low-iodine diet for you. This diet is an important part of your treatment. Most times, you will start the diet 2 weeks before testing and will stay on the diet until your treatment is done.

Be sure to:

- Follow the diet closely.
- Eat less than 50 micrograms (mcg) of iodine each day.
- Follow your doctor's orders for when to begin and end this diet.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether your medicines or vitamins contain any iodine or FD&C #3 food coloring.

The key to a low-iodine diet is to plan ahead. Make a shopping list before you go to the store to make sure that you buy only the foods that are allowed on the diet.

## **Iodine in Foods**

The main sources of iodine are iodized salt, seafood, dairy products, commercial bread products, and processed foods. The tables on pages 2 and 3 of this handout give guidelines to follow when deciding what to eat while on a low-iodine diet. Also keep in mind:

- Do not eat in restaurants while you are on a low-iodine diet. There is no way to know if iodized salt was used in preparing the food.
- Homemade foods shown in the "You May Eat" column must be made without iodized salt and must not contain other ingredients from the "Do Not Eat" column.
- Do **NOT** eat any foods that are colored red or pink. They may have the artificial color FD&C Red #3, which contains iodine. Examples of foods with food coloring are Kaboom or Trix cereal, fruit cocktail, Kool-aid, and Maraschino cherries.

Food Group	You May Eat	Do NOT Eat
<b>Dairy, Dairy Substitutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-dairy sorbet</li> <li>• 1 ounce of milk a day may be used in coffee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All fresh dairy including milk, yogurt, ice cream, cheese, salted butter or margarine, pudding, eggnog, sour cream, buttermilk, cream</li> <li>• Soy milk</li> <li>• Powdered dairy creamers</li> <li>• Liquid non-dairy creamers</li> </ul>
<b>Meats, Meat Substitutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb (<i>no more than 5 ounces a day</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Important:</b> Read the label on fresh, packaged meat products. Do NOT eat “pre-marinated” meats or those that list “sodium” or “sodium phosphate.” You may want to ask someone in the meat area to show you meat products that have “no added ingredients.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned, dried, salted, or cured meats, including luncheon meats, bacon, sausage, ham, chipped beef</li> <li>• Prepared meals such as TV dinners, pot pies, and all others</li> <li>• Meat substitutes such as tofu, soy hot dogs, and all others</li> <li>• Some beans, including kidney, lima, navy, pinto, garbanzos, and soybeans</li> <li>• Canned soups</li> </ul>
<b>Eggs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egg whites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole eggs, egg yolks</li> </ul>
<b>Fish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish, shellfish, canned fish, sardines</li> </ul>
<b>Grains, Starches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-sodium bread, pasta, or noodles (<i>made with no salt or eggs</i>)</li> <li>• Plain rice (<i>not packaged or enriched</i>), rice cakes (<i>no added salt</i>)</li> <li>• Matzos (<i>unsalted</i>), hot cereals (<i>made without salt</i>), popcorn (<i>no iodized salt, soy oil, or butter</i>)</li> <li>• Fresh potatoes without skins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular bread, commercial bakery products such as cookies, cakes, pies</li> <li>• Instant hot cereals, cold cereals</li> <li>• Snack mixes, pretzels, chips, salted crackers</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh fruits and 100% fruit juices (<i>2 to 3 servings a day</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhubarb, Maraschino cherries, fruit cocktail with cherries, dried fruits</li> </ul>

Food Group	You May Eat	Do NOT Eat
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh or fresh frozen vegetables without salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned vegetables with added salt, frozen vegetables with sauces, canned tomato products, vegetable juices, kelp</li> <li>• Canned soups</li> <li>• Pickles, sauerkraut, olives</li> </ul>
<b>Fats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable and olive oils, salt-free butter or margarine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular butter or margarine, commercial salad dressings, mayonnaise, packaged or canned gravy mixes</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water, fruit juice, brewed coffee or tea, homemade lemonade, colas, lemon-lime soda, beer, wine, other alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, cocoa mix, lemonade mix, Kool-aid, instant coffee or tea, water with added salts or electrolytes, sodas with red dye #3, cooking wine</li> </ul>
<b>Desserts, Sweets, Snacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural honey, natural jellies (without food coloring)</li> <li>• Granulated sugar</li> <li>• Popcorn (made with vegetable oil), unsalted potato chips</li> <li>• Homemade fruit pies, homemade plain cake</li> <li>• Mocha Mix nondairy ice cream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed honey, jelly with food coloring, ice cream, puddings, and commercially prepared desserts (including pies, cookies, cakes, and others)</li> <li>• Pretzels, salted crackers, chips</li> <li>• All candies</li> <li>• Sulfured or blackstrap molasses</li> </ul>
<b>Nuts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsalted almonds (<i>limit to 1 ounce a day</i>)</li> <li>• Unsalted peanut butter (<i>limit to 2 Tablespoons a day</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All salted nuts, all other unsalted nuts</li> </ul>
<b>Flavorings, Seasonings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, fresh herbs, non-iodized salt</li> <li>• Vinegar</li> <li>• Lemon and lime juice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iodized salt, sea salt, garlic salt, onion salt, meat tenderizers, bouillon cubes</li> <li>• Ketchup, mustard, soy sauce</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate</li> <li>• Multivitamins with iodine</li> </ul>

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Dietitian/Diet Technician:

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## Easy, Quick Meals

- Oatmeal with cinnamon or honey, plus 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, unsalted peanut butter, jelly

## Easy Snacks for Home, Work, or Travel

- Fresh fruit or juice
- Fresh raw vegetables
- Applesauce
- Popcorn
- Unsalted almonds
- Unsalted peanut butter (great with apple slices, carrot sticks, unsalted crackers, and rice cakes)
- Unsalted Matzo crackers and other unsalted crackers
- Homemade low-iodine bread or muffins

## To Learn More

Visit the Thyroid Cancer Association website at [www.thyca.org](http://www.thyca.org). Click on “Low Iodine Diet” on the left side of the home page.

## Notes

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