



Low Iodine Diet

The purpose of this diet is to decrease the amount of iodine in your daily food choices. This is a low iodine diet, not an iodine free diet or salt free diet. **The goal is to eat less than 50 micrograms (mcg) of iodine a day.** One teaspoon of iodized salt contains 400 mcg of iodine.

This diet is used for a short time period, often 2 weeks before a radioactive iodine scan or treatment. If you eat a diet high in iodine before your test or treatment, it will affect the results.

Avoid the following

- Iodized salt, salt substitute, kelp, sea salt and seasoned salt. Non-iodized salt is okay to use.
- Any foods that have iodine, iodate, iodide or salt on the food label. Most food companies use non-iodized salt in their products. However there is no guarantee as to what type they use, so it is best to avoid all products that have salt listed on the food label.
- Multivitamin or mineral supplements that contain iodine.
- All seafood, fish, shellfish, seaweed and products including carrageenan, agar-agar, alginate and nori.
- All dairy products including all types of milk, butter, cream, yogurt, ice cream, milkshakes, sherbet, ice milk, evaporated milk, sour cream, whipped cream, all cheeses and cottage cheese.
- Egg yolks, whole eggs and foods containing egg yolks or whole eggs.
- Blackstrap molasses.
- Most chocolate due to milk content.
- All store bought baked goods including pies, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, buns, pastries, biscuits and breads.
- All fast foods and restaurant meals.
- Soybeans and soybean products including tofu, Texturized Vegetable Protein (TVP), soy milk and soy sauce.



- Cured meats, such as ham, bacon, lunch meats and hot dogs.
- Boxed or canned dinners, frozen meals and canned soups.
- Red dye #3, (FD&C #3 erythrosine) found in some red candies, cereals, canned fruit, Jell-O and medicines.
- Vitamins and food supplements that have iodine.

Food Group	Allowed	Avoid
Drinks	Coffee, tea, carbonated beverages (soda), lemonade, water	All milk products, red fruit drinks or punch Caution: many non-dairy creamers have iodine
Grains	Matzo crackers Up to 4 servings a day of grains, cereals, pasta and breads that do not have iodine	Instant hot cereals, store bought breads, biscuits, muffins, crackers and baked goods that have iodate conditioners Egg noodles Processed box cereals
Milk and Dairy Products	None	Milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream, powdered milk, powdered creamer, cream, pudding, custard Non-dairy milk substitutes
Desserts and Sweets	Sugar, jelly, corn syrups, honey, maple syrup, cocoa powder and some dark chocolate (read food label and do not eat if it contains milk)	Store bought desserts or sweets, milk chocolate
Eggs	Egg whites	Egg yolks or whole eggs and food that have egg yolks or whole eggs
Fats	Most fats such as vegetable oils and margarine	Butter Mayonnaise Commercial salad dressings
Fruits and Fruit Juices	All fresh and frozen fruits Any canned fruits that do not contain red dye	Canned fruits with red dye such as fruit cocktail and maraschino cherries

Food Group	Allowed	Avoid
Meats and Meat Substitutes	Natural peanut butter with no added salt Unsalted nuts Up to 6 ounces of fresh meat a day, such as beef, veal, pork, chicken, turkey, lamb	All seafood including fish and shellfish Smoked and cured meats, such as ham, bacon, lunch meats, hot dogs Dried beans, legumes, soybeans or soybean products (soy oil and soy lecithin - a food additive - are okay) Meats that are injected with broth, often found in turkey, chicken and pork Salted nuts and salted nut butters
Salt	Non-iodized salt	Iodized salt, sea salt
Vegetables	All fresh or frozen without salt Potatoes without the skin	Canned or frozen vegetables with salt Instant mashed potatoes Potato with the skin Frozen onion rings and French fries
Miscellaneous	Herbs, spices, pepper, vinegar Soy oil and soy lecithin (a food additive)	Store bought snack foods, including pretzels and potato chips Liquid nutritional supplements, such as Ensure, Boost, Carnation Breakfast Essentials Gravies Seaweed or bouillon cubes or soup bases and stocks Commercial sauces, such as soy, ketchup, tomato and chili Canned soup

Meal and snack ideas

Here are some meal and snack ideas using foods you are allowed to eat when on a low iodine diet:

Meal Ideas

- Oatmeal topped with cinnamon, honey, applesauce, nuts or fruit
- Scrambled egg whites and fried potatoes (without skin)
- Egg casserole made with egg whites, fresh chicken, fresh tomatoes and fresh mushrooms
- Salad made with fresh chicken or beef, vegetables of your choice and oil and vinegar dressing
- Rice cake with unsalted peanut butter and jelly with vegetables as a side
- Grilled fresh pork with broccoli and baked apples with cinnamon
- Matzo crackers layered with sliced fresh chicken, home made pesto and tomatoes
- Steak, salad and a baked potato (do not eat the skin)
- Stir-fried vegetables and fresh beef over rice
- Fresh grilled chicken pasta salad made with fresh vegetables and oil and vinegar dressing

Snack Ideas

- Dried fruit such as raisins
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Unsalted popcorn
- Unsalted nuts
- Unsalted peanut butter on a banana, apple or celery sticks
- Fruit juice or soda (that do not contain Red Dye #3)
- Fruit smoothie made with juice and frozen berries

More Ideas and Recipes

Visit the ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc.'s website at www.thyca.org. This site has a low iodine cookbook that can be downloaded for free. The cookbook has over 340 recipes to help you prepare foods you can eat while on this diet.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to patienteducation.osumc.edu or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.