

Recommended Low Iodine Diet before radioactive iodine treatment for thyroid cancer

Please try not to feel anxious about this diet. You can avoid high levels of iodine in your diet by preparing meals from ingredients and foods listed in the 'OK TO EAT' column, according to your preference and tolerances. Only the foods in the 'TRY NOT TO EAT' column need to be avoided.

 OK TO EAT	 TRY NOT TO EAT
Fresh and frozen fruit	Seaweed, including kelp supplements
Fresh and frozen vegetables	
Fresh and frozen meats	Seafood and fish
Potatoes	Cow's and goat's milk (including organic cow's milk), cheese, ice cream, yoghurt and butter
Bread	Plant-based alternatives to milk (e.g. oat/soya/almond) that have added iodine
Rice	Eggs/ egg yolks
Pasta (dried)	Fresh pasta (which is made with eggs)
Pulses and grains	Cakes and biscuits containing eggs and dairy fats/butter
Plain fats and oils (non-dairy) including olive oil spread	Soy products (e.g. soy sauce, soy milk, tofu)
Soft drinks, fruit juices, tea and coffee	Multivitamin and mineral supplements and some cough mixtures that contain iodine
Dark chocolate	Milk and white chocolate



Table salt and sea salt (with no added iodine) may be used if required but avoid high quantities of salt for general healthy eating



Beer and wine within the general recommendations for healthy drinking



Please do not stop taking any of your regular medicines or supplements without speaking to your thyroid team

Endorsements/logos: This Low Iodine Diet has been endorsed for use by



For further information about this diet and some meal plan ideas please follow this link <https://www.btf-thyroid.org/low-iodine-diet> or scan this QR code

The Low Iodine Diet (LID)

The low iodine diet (LID) is recommended for people who will be treated with radioactive iodine (RAI). This information leaflet explains the reasons for trying to avoid foods that are high in iodine and suggests low iodine foods that you can eat.

Why follow a LID?

Research suggests that a diet which is high in iodine may affect the results of your RAI treatment. The purpose of the LID is to reduce the amount of iodine in your body before your treatment begins. This helps the RAI to be absorbed correctly.

Do your best to follow the LID but remember it is not possible or necessary to follow a diet that has no iodine. The aim is to avoid having high iodine levels. Most doctors agree that following the LID makes only a small difference to the effectiveness of your treatment.

Where is iodine found?

Iodine is found in many foods in varying amounts. It is essential for good health. The foods with the highest iodine are those from the sea, dairy produce, and eggs.

In many countries iodine is added to salt. This does not happen routinely in the UK, therefore it is fine to use UK table salt so long as it is not labelled as being iodised.

Some milk-alternative drinks such as oat drink, soya drink and almond drink are fortified with iodine (usually labelled as **potassium iodide or potassium iodate**) and/or contain **carrageenan** or **lithothamnium** (seaweed derivatives which are high in iodine). Always try to check the labels carefully for suitable products that do not contain these ingredients. It is not necessary to use **organic** dairy alternatives (such as an organic soya drink), but it may be helpful to know that these products cannot be fortified with iodine.

How long should the LID be followed for?

The diet is for a short time only. Evidence suggests that following it for just one week is sufficient and will ensure that your iodine levels are not high. Please start your diet on:

Two hours after you have received the RAI treatment you can return to your normal diet.

What if I eat something high in iodine by mistake?

Eating a high iodine food accidentally is unlikely to affect your treatment. If you do, just carry on with the LID recommendations provided here.

Should I look on the internet for further information?

Much of the LID information which is found online is written for patients in countries where the food is produced using iodised salt or where other products like flour have iodine added. Guidance from the internet is often not relevant for people living in the UK and it can be confusing.

Special diets

If you are currently following a diet under medical guidance (e.g. for diabetes or coeliac disease) please discuss this with your thyroid team and/or your dietitian.

If you have any questions about the LID contact: _____