

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.

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.
- Potato skins. The inside of the potato is fine. Avoid rhubarb also.
- Iodine-containing vitamins and food supplements.

Allowed Foods and Ingredients

- Fruits except rhubarb and maraschino cherries (with Red Dye #3)
- Vegetables: raw or frozen without salt, except soybeans and (according to the 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 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, plain peanut butter, jelly

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

Our thanks to our medical advisors and conference speakers for your information and support.

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