

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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How Much Iodine

There's been some concern recently that we're getting caught in another nutrition pinch. Years ago, back in the '50s, salt manufacturers started to add iodine to their salt. They did it for a very good, very visible public health reason. Too many people had goiter. Everybody ate salt, so cure the goiter with salt. But now, too many people have high blood pressure. We could eliminate a lot of that if we stopped eating - salt! What are we to do? And what does salt have to do with goiter?

Goiter is the condition when our thyroid gland swells. The thyroid sits in our throat, right on top of the Adam's Apple. When it doesn't get enough iodine to make the hormones it is supposed to make, it swells. There are some pretty horrible photos in nutrition books of folks whose throats are so swollen they can only look up at the ceiling.

Besides a swollen throat, not enough iodine can be disastrous for infants. It's necessary for brain and nervous system development. Babies who don't get enough before they are born can be mentally handicapped for life. Children can have developmental problems. Even adults who don't get enough can have trouble thinking clearly and working well.

So at a time when many people were not getting enough iodine, adding it to salt was an excellent public health measure. The number of goiters dropped like a rock. Infants and children developed the way they were intended to. Thank goodness!

But over the years, we've kept on eating salt, lots and lots of it. So now our blood pressures are heading for the sky. Not good! Doctors are telling us to eat less salt. In addition, we have all kinds of specialty salts available now, instead of just the blue box of Morton's® 'When it rains, It pours'. Most of them do not have iodine added, although a few have it naturally. Plus, most of the salt in our diets comes from what is added in processing. And most of that is not iodized.

So, we're not getting as much iodine as we used to. What are we to do to avoid goiter and developmental problems? Fortunately, there is iodine in many foods. And a national survey has found that the great majority of us do have enough iodine in our blood. Eating a balanced diet should keep enough iodine coming into our systems to keep the thyroid happy.

The best sources of iodine are seafoods. That includes fish, and yes shrimp, that live in the oceans, as well as seaweed. Freshwater fish such as catfish and tilapia are not very good sources. But if you like Japanese foods, go for the seaweed soups, or sushi wrapped in seaweed. There are salads made or topped with slivered seaweed. Dairy products are also good sources of iodine. Milk of course, but yogurt and cheeses also have good amounts of iodine for us. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables contain iodine too. However in plants, how much iodine they have depends partly on how much was in the soil where they grew. So fruits or veggies from different parts of the country could have significant differences in the amount of iodine they contain. But eat a variety of all these foods and you should be in good shape.

There are supplements, and occasionally a doctor may recommend one for iodine. It's usually sodium or potassium iodide. But talk to your doctor before you decide to supplement yourself. Iodine can interfere with some medications, especially those for blood pressure. And too much iodine can also have side effects, including swollen thyroid glands and cancer of the thyroid. Even just a few very high doses can cause stomach upset, burning in the mouth, diarrhea or worse.

Here's a marinated fish dish that you can prepare in the oven or on the grill. It's simple to make, tastes delish, and will give you a healthy boost of iodine. Oh, and marinating foods before you grill will also help cut down the carcinogens from the grill!

Marinated Fish (Amberjack or other)

4 pounds fresh or frozen fish fillets	½ cup olive or vegetable oil
3 Tbsp lemon juice	2 tsp Dijon mustard with white wine
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ tsp ground pepper

Thaw fish (in refrigerator) if frozen. Lay out in shallow dish. Combine other ingredients in small jar, close tightly and shake to combine. Pour over fish. Turn fish over to cover both sides. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour, turning once more. Preheat broiler (or grill). Remove fish from marinade, arrange in single layer on broiler pan, and baste with marinade. Broil 5 to 6 inches from heat for about 10 minutes, until fish flakes easily with a fork. Serves 8.

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