

Iodine

Why it is important

Iodine is a nutrient that we need in very small amounts. It is important for a healthy thyroid, growth and development. As our bodies cannot store iodine, we need to eat foods high in iodine most days. Seafood, some fish, cow's milk and bread contain iodine.

Having enough iodine is most important during pregnancy and when breastfeeding

Iodine is very important during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Iodine is needed for the normal development of a baby's brain and nervous system. Extra is required during these times. If you are planning a pregnancy or are likely to become pregnant, the current advice is:

Take an iodine supplement of 150 micrograms **each day** that you are:

- planning a pregnancy
- pregnant
- breastfeeding.

Continue to eat foods containing iodine.*

*When pregnant take extra care when choosing to eat seafood due to mercury levels.

What about everyone else, including children?

We only need iodine in very small amounts. You can get enough by eating these foods most days of the week:

- Cow's milk and yoghurt.
- Bread - most store-bought bread in Australia now contains iodised salt. Organic bread and bread mixes for making bread at home are not required to contain iodised salt. The manufacturer may choose to use it; check the ingredients list.
- Seafood and some fish (such as flathead, tuna and salmon, including tinned varieties).

How do I make sure I get enough iodine?

If you eat bread and have dairy foods (e.g. milk or yoghurt) on most days of the week you will get the iodine you need. If you don't, then you may need to talk to your doctor about whether you are getting enough iodine.

What about iodised salt at home?

Too much salt can affect blood pressure and some other health conditions, so we don't suggest using more. If you do use salt, use iodised salt.

Want to know more

Ask your GP or an Accredited Practising Dietitian