NHS
University Hospitals
Coventry and Warwickshire
NHS Trust

# Dietetics

# Low Iodine Diet – a one week diet

## Dietary advice for people before the diagnostic and therapeutic radioiodine procedures

This diet is suitable for people who are to be treated with radioactive iodine. This information leaflet explains the reasons for limiting foods that are high in iodine and suggests low iodine options.

## Why follow a low iodine diet?

A diet which is rich in iodine could interfere with your radioactive iodine treatment. A low iodine diet aims to reduce your iodine intake before your treatment and helps to maximise your body's uptake of the radioactive iodine when you receive your treatment. It is not possible or necessary to follow a no iodine diet.

## Where is iodine found?

Iodine is found in many foods in varying amounts; it is important for good health. The richest sources are foods from the sea as well as eggs and dairy products. In some countries iodine is added to salt; this does not happen in the UK, therefore it is fine to use ordinary table salt, but best to avoid imported food items.

## How long should the low iodine diet be followed for?

The diet is for a short time only. Evidence suggests that the duration of one or two weeks is enough.

Please start your diet on: ___/___/_____ (One week before your treatment)

After you have received the radioactive iodine 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, just carry on with the low iodine dietary advice provided here.

## Should I look on the internet for further information?

No; most internet information suggests avoiding all foods that contain salt. This is not necessary in the UK.

If you have any questions or queries please contact: Coventry Dietitians on 024 7696 6161. If you are taking nutritional supplements please contact your dietitian.

## Low iodine foods you can eat freely

- ✓ Fresh/frozen fruit and vegetables, including potatoes
- ✓ Cooked green vegetables like spinach and broccoli
- ✓ Fresh/frozen meat
- ✓ Ordinary table salt and sea salt
- ✓ Rice and dried pasta
- ✓ Fresh bread (including fresh sliced bread)
- ✓ Non-dairy spread such as Vitalite or Pure or Flora non-dairy
- ✓ Olive oil, vegetable oils and nut oils
- ✓ Water, soft/fizzy drinks, fruit juices & alcoholic drinks
- ✓ Tea and coffee without milk
- ✓ Milk substitutes such as rice, coconut, almond or soya milk (please check labels for ingredients and avoid brands that contain carrageenan which is a seaweed derivative)
- ✓ Dark/plain chocolate with a minimum of 70% cocoa
- ✓ Crisps

## Foods which should be limited

- Milk - limit to a maximum of 25ml per day which could be used in tea and coffee (i.e. about 5-7 teaspoons of milk per day)
- Butter - limit to a very thin scraping (one teaspoon or 5g) per day
- Cheese - one ounce or 25g once per week
- Dairy produce like yoghurt, dairy ice cream etc. (limit to one portion per week)
- Egg - one per week only
- Egg containing products like mayonnaise, custard, fresh egg pasta, egg fried rice, pancakes, Yorkshire puddings etc.

## High iodine foods which should be avoided

- × Fish, seafood, seaweed, kelp, laverbread
- × Raw green vegetables like spinach or broccoli
- × Cakes and biscuits containing butter and eggs
- × Milk chocolate and white chocolate
- × Take away- meals and fast foods/restaurant foods (as ingredients are unknown)
- × Iodised salt and Pink Himalayan salt if imported/bought outside the UK
- × Vitamins and mineral supplements, nutritional supplements and cough mixtures

  (unless prescribed by your medical team, for example vitamin D)

# Meal suggestions

## Breakfast

- Toast with non-dairy spread and marmalade, jam, honey, marmite
- Porridge made with water or milk substitute (specific brands cannot be suggested as ingredients might be changed over time by the producer), topped with fruit, honey or syrup
- Cereals with water or milk substitute
- Fresh fruit or fruit salad or Grapefruit cocktail
- Cooked breakfast (without eggs) such as bacon, sausages, tomatoes, mushrooms, hash browns, baked beans, toast

## Lunch

- Sandwich made with non-dairy spread filled with ham, chicken, bacon or quorn and salad
- Salad (such as cucumber, lettuce, tomato, avocado, sweetcorn, peas) with olive oil and vinegar (no raw spinach or raw broccoli) topped with chicken breast
- Jacket potato (without butter) with baked beans or chilli con carne
- Beans or tinned tomatoes on toast
- Soup (without cream, butter or milk) with bread
- Couscous with meat, chicken or chickpeas and vegetables such as roasted peppers, courgettes, tomatoes

## Dinner

- Spaghetti Bolognese
- Pork or lamb chops with potatoes and vegetables
- Steak served with roasted mushrooms, grilled tomatoes, chips or jacket potato
- Roasted meat, vegetables and roasted potatoes with gravy
- Chicken, meat, Quorn or tofu stir fry with vegetables and rice
- Stewed meat (chicken, beef, lamb or pork) with potatoes, carrots and swede
- Chilli con carne with rice and peas
- Jacket potato (without butter) with baked beans, ham or chicken and salad
- Sweet and sour chicken with rice
- Risotto (without cheese) with chicken, butternut squash, peas and sweetcorn
- Curry dishes without cream

## Snacks & Puddings

- Tinned  or fresh fruit, stewed or poached fruit
- Jelly, sorbet, meringue
- Soya dessert or soya yoghurt
- Dairy free custard or single cream alternative
- Vegetable crudities and homemade avocado dip (guacamole) or soya plain yoghurt & mint sauce
- Nuts (maximum 30g/1oz per day)

- Sweet or salted popcorn
- Potato crisps or rice cakes
- Dark Chocolate

## Further Information

This information has been developed by UK Low Iodine Diet Working Group and adopted by UHCW Head and Neck Cancer Multidisciplinary Team and Coventry Dietitians.

**If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the Coventry Dietitians team on 024 7696 6161.**

The UK Low Iodine Diet Working Group has developed a questionnaire to help evaluate, review and adjust the patient information leaflet in the future. Your experience and comments would be much appreciated. You can access this as an online survey using the following link https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PHHJH9B, or alternatively, ask a member of the team for a paper copy of the questionnaire.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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| **Document History** | |
|---|---|
| Department: | Dietetics |
| Contact: | 26161 |
| Updated: | September 2024 |
| Review: | September 2027 |
| Version: | 7.4 |
| Reference: | HIC/LFT/397/07 |