

Lower iodine diet guidelines

This leaflet explains about following a low iodine diet. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your clinical nurse specialist.

Why do I need to follow a low iodine diet?

You have been scheduled to receive radioactive iodine therapy and therefore you will be asked to follow a diet low in iodine for two weeks prior to this.

Limiting iodine in your diet will reduce the iodine stores in your body so when you swallow the radioactive iodine capsule your thyroid will be 'starved' of iodine and will absorb more of the therapy.

Which foods contain a lot of iodine?

The amount of iodine in food varies due to local soil and processing procedures. Dairy products contain traces of iodine due to the cleansing and processing agents used, similarly, seafood contains iodine due to the naturally occurring iodine in the ocean.

- It is important that you avoid all foods that come from the ocean either fresh or frozen including, canned, smoked or salted. All seafood, for example shellfish, lobster, crab, prawns, scampi, and all fish products such as fish fingers, fish cakes, fish paste.
- Do not take any vitamin supplement which contains kelp, alginate, seaweed.
- Restrict your intake of spinach and lettuce – all other vegetables are allowed.
- Any iodised salt products such as rock salt. Normal table salt without additives can be used, check the label.
- Small amounts of milk and dairy are permitted such as milk on your cereal or in tea and coffee. You may wish to restrict your cheese intake if this is a daily food choice for you.
- Continue to eat meat such as chicken, pork or beef. If you are vegetarian please ensure you substitute with other forms of protein such as nuts and small amounts of cheese.

PLEASE REMEMBER: This is a low iodine diet not a complete iodine free diet. It is impossible to know how much iodine is in some foods so this is a guideline only.

Do not restrict your diet so much that you become ill as this will affect how you manage the radioactive iodine therapy.

Low iodine diet websites from America tend to be more restrictive than we would recommend at Guy's and St Thomas'. Therefore, if you have any questions, concerns or doubts please contact your thyroid nurse specialist or doctor.

You can resume your normal diet as soon as you are discharged.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the low iodine diet, please contact your thyroid clinical nurse specialist on 0207 188 4098 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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