



Patient & Family Guide  
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# Reading Food Labels for a Low Iodine Diet



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# **Reading Food Labels for a Low Iodine Diet**

## **Getting ready for your radioiodine scan or treatment**

You will soon have a radioiodine scan or treatment. To get ready, it is important to follow a low iodine diet so that your thyroid cells will not have much iodine in them. Then, when you are given iodine for your radioiodine scan or treatment, it will go straight to your thyroid cells.

Iodine is not always listed on food labels. Knowing which foods have iodine in them and how to read food labels to find sources of iodine can help you to follow a low iodine diet.

## **How is a radioiodine scan done?**

You will be given an iodine pill. The iodine will go straight to your thyroid cells, so your doctor can clearly see them.

## **How is radioiodine treatment done?**

You will be given a larger dose of iodine than you would have for a scan. The iodine will go straight to your thyroid cells and destroy them, including those with cancer.

# How do I read a food label?

Ingredients are listed in order from the largest amount to the smallest amount.

Example 1:

Cracker

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size	9 crackers (23g)
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>90</b>
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 4.5g	6%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	13%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 280mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 3g	6%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 26mg	2%
Iron 1.44mg	8%
Potassium 0mg	0%
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	0%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Ingredients: unbleached enriched flour, *soybeans*\*, *whey (from milk)*\*, sugar, sunflower oil, *salt*\*, yeast

Ingredients marked with a \* have iodine.

Example 2:

Low iodine cracker

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size	4 crackers (20g)
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>90</b>
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 0.3g	2%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	4%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 26mg	2%
Iron 1.08mg	6%
Potassium 0mg	0%
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	0%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Ingredients: unbleached wheat flour, safflower oil, raw sugar, brown rice syrup, baking soda

**Avoiding ingredients that have iodine is the best way to follow a low iodine diet.**

NOTE: **Sodium (salt)** can naturally be in food. Check the ingredient list and avoid added salt, as most salts have iodine added (iodized salt).

## What foods and ingredients should I avoid?

Read food labels carefully. The following ingredients have iodine and should be avoided:

- **Iodized salt and sea salt:** flavoured seasoning salts and salted, brined, or cured foods. If the label only lists 'salt' as an ingredient, it is best to avoid it, as it may be iodized.
- **Eggs:** whole eggs and egg yolks.
- **Dairy products:** milk, cream, butter, cheese, milk protein, whey, casein and caseinates.
- **Soy:** soybeans, soya, miso, soya sauce, tofu and edamame. Soybean oil and soy lecithin are OK.
- **Sea products:** fish, shellfish, seaweed, kelp, nori, alginate, algae, agar, algin (found in some medicines), carrageenan and fish oil.
- **Iodine:** potassium iodate and calcium iodate.
- **Red No. 3 (red dye/food colouring):** FD&C Red No. 3, erythrosine.

**Sodium is safe in most forms.** For example: sodium bicarbonate (baking soda, baking powder), sodium benzoate and monosodium glutamate (MSG).

My dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Where can I learn more?**

### **Thyroid Cancer Canada**

[www.thyroidcancercanada.org/en/treatments/  
radioactive-iodine-treatment](http://www.thyroidcancercanada.org/en/treatments/radioactive-iodine-treatment)

### **Thyroid Foundation of Canada**

<https://thyroid.ca/resource-material/articles/e-4-n>

### **ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc.**

<http://thyca.org/pap-fol/lowiodinediet>

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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*Prepared by:* Department of Metabolism and Endocrinology

*Designed by:* NSHA Library Services

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.