PATIENT INFORMATION

The Low Iodine Diet

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 alternatives.

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 essential for good health. The richest sources are foods from the sea. Eggs and dairy products also contain iodine. 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. Many milk-alternative drinks such as oat drink, soya drink and almond drink are fortified with iodine (usually labelled as potassium iodide) and/or contain carrageenan (a seaweed derivative high in iodine). Check the labels carefully for suitable products that do not contain these ingredients.

How long should the low iodine diet be followed for?
The diet is for a short time only. Evidence suggests that a duration of one or two weeks is sufficient. After you have received the radioactive iodine treatment you can return to your normal diet.

Please start your diet on:_____

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: _____
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-alternative drinks such as oat drink, soya drink and almond drink that do not contain potassium iodide or carrageenan
- ✓ 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)
- ✗ Milk-alternative drinks such as oat drink, soya drink and almond drink that contain potassium iodide or carrageenan

Meal suggestions

Breakfast
- Toast with non-dairy spread and marmalade, jam, honey, marmite
- Porridge made with water or milk alternative drink*, topped with fruit, honey or syrup
- Cereals with water or milk alternative drink*
- 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

*specific brands of milk-alternative drinks cannot be suggested as ingredients might be changed over time by the producer. Check labels carefully for potassium iodide or carrageenan.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.