



Food Sources: Iodine

Iodine is an essential trace mineral that plays a critical role in the production of thyroid hormones. Since the amount of iodine in soil varies depending on the region, especially between inland and coastal areas, the iodine levels in food can differ greatly. Coastal soils tend to be richer in iodine, which is why seaweed and seafood are some of the best natural sources. Dairy foods are also a reliable source, partly because iodine-based disinfectants are commonly used in the dairy industry.

For adults, the recommended daily intake of iodine is about 150 micrograms (mcg). During pregnancy, this increases to 220 mcg, and for breastfeeding women, it rises further to 290 mcg. The maximum safe intake for adults is set at 1,100 mcg per day.

Maintaining balanced iodine levels is crucial, since both deficiency and excess can affect thyroid function. Low iodine intake reduces thyroid hormone production and may lead to goiter, hypothyroidism, or developmental issues in infants and children. On the other hand, consuming too much iodine can also disrupt thyroid health, potentially causing conditions such as hyperthyroidism or thyroiditis.

Because iodine supplements can easily push intake above safe levels and may interact with medications, it's best to consult a functional medicine practitioner or healthcare provider before starting them.

Average Iodine Content in Common Foods

- Seaweed, 1 g dried: 16–2,984 mcg*
- Cod, baked, 3 oz: 158 mcg
- Plain nonfat Greek yogurt, 8 oz: 116 mcg
- Oysters, cooked, 3 oz: 93 mcg
- Cow's milk, 8 oz: 85 mcg
- Iodized salt, ¼ tsp: 76 mcg
- Egg, 1 large: 26 mcg
- Cheddar cheese, 1.5 oz: 21 mcg
- Wild salmon, cooked, 3 oz: 14 mcg
- Shrimp, cooked, 3 oz: 1 mcg