

Iodine

Kim Schuette, CN

Far from the newcomer on the block of holistic remedies, iodine has been a traditional remedy used by doctors in years past as an antiseptic and natural antibiotic. As far back as 2700 B.C. records show that Emperor Shen Nung used seaweed for the treatment of goiters. Pliny, Vitruvius and Juvenal describe prevalence of goiter in the Alps and use of burnt seaweed for treatment in 40 B.C. Dr. Weston A. Price reported in 1939 that certain primitive cultures used iodine to successfully treat goiters.

Why Did Iodine Fall out of Favor?

It was during World War II that patented pharmaceuticals like penicillin and sulfa drugs began to replace iodine. In 1969 Drs. Drs. Jan Wolff and Israel Lyon Chaikoff erroneously theorized that large amounts of iodine were harmful. Unfortunately, a large portion of the medical community bought their theory and recommended dosages of iodine in the United States dropped to a low of 150 mcg. daily. This stands in sharp contrast to the average Japanese intake of 12 mg. or more daily.

Indisputable Benefits of Iodine

Iodine is present in every organ and tissue in the body. It is key to intelligence, proper fetal development, the health of salivary glands, endometrium, prostate, ovaries and skin.

Research has shown that women with good iodine status bear smarter children. Researchers at Bristol and Surrey universities in England studied 1,040 pregnant women and discovered that children born to mothers with even mild iodine deficiencies had lower IQs and reading levels.

Scientists conducting a meta-analysis of studies on iodine in China concluded: "The level of iodine nutrition plays a crucial role in the intellectual development of children."

Role of Iodine in Detoxification

Iodine is present in every organ and tissue in the body. It is key to intelligence, proper fetal development, the health of salivary glands, endometrium, prostate, ovaries and skin. Iodine assists in many bodily functions including detoxification of radiation and toxic metals, especially mercury; thins excess phlegm and mucous; improves water metabolism and relieves water retention; cleanses the lymphatic system and blood; and supports thyroid function. Iodine is necessary in order for the thyroid gland to produce adequate amounts of thyroid hormones, in particular T4. Additionally, iodine helps alleviate liver stagnation. This plays a significant role in the liver's ability to convert T4 to the more biologically active thyroid hormone, T3.

Iodine and Breast Health

Part of iodine's vital role in both thyroid and liver health contributes to protecting the breasts from abnormalities. Iodine is used therapeutically to assist the body in resolving breast cysts, as well as uterine fibroids and ovarian cysts. Iodine deficiency is a common finding in cases of fibrocystic breast disease, breast cancer and other hormone driven cancers such as prostate, ovarian and uterine cancers. Essential to breast development and protective against cysts, iodine desensitizes estrogen receptor in the receptors in the breasts. Iodine reduces estrogen production in overactive ovaries, making it therapeutic for those suffering from estrogen dominance, premenstrual syndrome and polycystic ovarian syndrome.

In my clinical experience, iodine is one of the best support minerals for acne and eczema. Iodine is also an important antioxidant as well as an inducer of apoptosis in cancerous tumors. Iodine

has anti-sclerotic properties making it beneficial for use in persons with atherosclerosis. Historically iodine has been used to treat syphilis, malaria, scarlet fever, obesity, depression, pneumonia, uterine fibroids and prostatic hypertrophy.

Food Sources

The best food sources of iodine are wild ocean fish and seafood. Seaweed (marine algae) products such as kelp, nori, dulse, hijiki, arame and wakame. Caution should be used in choosing seaweed products since the Fukushima nuclear power plant leak. Products from Japanese waters are best avoided.

Assessing Iodine Sufficiency

Several laboratories now are able to determine whole body iodine sufficiency through the use of a 24-hour collection test. This is a very simple and cost effective test and is available through my office. We also offer iodine patch testing. This requires a 2" square patch of iodine be painted on the arm or thigh and assessed for its length of time present on the skin. The faster the body absorbs the iodine, the greater the need for iodine.

How Much Iodine is Enough?

100-400 times the USRDA of iodine is recommended by expert doctors such as Guy Abraham, M.D., David Brownstein, M.D. and many others. Supplemental sources that I recommend include Lugol's, Iodoral, Nascent Iodine and Prolamine Iodine. According to Dr. Guy Abraham, a researcher and an authority on the safe use of iodine, the daily dose of iodine should be 12.5 mg. to 37.5 mg. daily. The Japanese live longer and have lower rates of breast and thyroid cancer than any other population. And as we all know, they generally have very high levels of intelligence. Could it be the iodine?

The information in this post is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any disease or disorder. Always consult with your health care practitioner. Iodine dosing is best done under the guidance of a knowledgeable health care practitioner.

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Kim has been in private practice in the field of nutrition since 1999. She has been trained in hair mineral analysis, salivary hormone balancing and blood chemistry assessment. Her workshop topics range from children's health and female hormonal concerns to transitioning to a whole foods diet. Kim is an award-winning activist for her work in children's nutrition and preconception nutrition. Additionally, she was named "Best Alternative Health Practitioner of 2013" by Ranch & Coast Magazine in their annual "Best of San Diego" edition in March 2013. She serves on the honorary board of the Weston A. Price Foundation as well as the San Diego Chapter Co-Leader of the Weston A. Price Foundation.