

## CHRONIC IODINE DEFICIENCIES AND THE USE OF IODORAL – AN IODINE/IODATE SUPPLEMENT Robert Rowen, M.D.

Forty years ago, the food industry regularly added iodine to store-bought bread. One slice of bread once contained about 150 mcg iodine, the whole day's RDA. Your average diet in 1960 contained about one mg of iodine per day, with bakery products providing 726 mcg. This amount was enough to significantly reduce your thyroid gland's ability to absorb radioactive iodine. It also was enough to lower excess thyroid hormone release, preventing hyperthyroidism. And it would provide more availability of iodine for your breasts or prostate.

Then it was withdrawn for fear of adverse effects from too much iodine (Iodophobia). It is very difficult to get too much iodine from food. But to make matters worse, the food industry decided to replace the iodine with bromine in many instances.

Bromine belongs to the halogen group of elements, also containing fluorine, chlorine, and iodine. All these elements have similar electrochemical properties, with bromine and iodine the most similar because of their larger sizes. To the thyroid, bromine looks like iodine and tightly binds to thyroid iodine receptors. However, bromine doesn't help the thyroid the way iodine does.

And, what's worse, Bromine & Chlorine also inhibit iodine's activity. Once the food industry stopped enriching your bread with iodine and replaced it with an element that doesn't work, and knocks out any remaining iodine, your body suffered a double whammy. Americans, across the board, are becoming severely deficient in iodine (about 90% or more).

Also, our soils are quite deficient in iodine and we Americans do not eat much seaweed and kelp which are good sources from the sea.

This deficiency is causing some terrible health problems. Researcher Guy Abraham, MD, my mentor on the subject, has amassed a ton of literature to prove the disease connection to iodine deficiency. Here are just a few:

**Fatigue** — An underactive thyroid typically causes fatigue. Iodine supplementation can quickly activate the thyroid and relieve fatigue. Dr Abraham reports iodine deficiency may harm pituitary-adrenal function in rodents. Your adrenal is essential for energy and stamina.

**Thyroid disease** — When there's not enough iodine to bind with cell membranes, it allows enzymes called peroxidases (which can damage those membranes) to wreak havoc and cause autoimmune disease, such as thyroiditis (Hashimoto's or Grave's). In fact, Dr. Abraham has several cases of both thyroiditis and hyperthyroidism (not just hypothyroidism) that have corrected after sufficient iodine/iodide supplementation. For over a century, high doses of iodine have helped both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism. Many doctors fear giving too much iodine will cause Hashimoto's to worsen. But this usually isn't the case.

While iodine will help the thyroid increase the production of hormone where necessary, it also inhibits over-release from the gland by giving thyroid enzymes what they want. These iodine-seeking enzymes that attack thyroid membranes can be normalized when they get the iodine they need. This old information is terrific news for the many people (usually women) who have been told to have their thyroid removed to end hyperthyroidism. These draconian measures ensure the patient will have to rely on prescriptive thyroid hormone for the rest of their life. But iodine can completely solve the problem.

One 1860 French physician mistakenly gave a tincture of iodine when he meant to give digitalis to a woman with Grave's Disease. She recovered within three weeks. When he discovered his mistake, he switched to digitalis, and her symptoms came back. He switched back to the iodine and achieved a remission.

**Poor digestion** — Many organs need iodine, but can't absorb it until the blood measurements reach very high levels. The stomach and salivary glands are two such organs, but they can't uptake iodine in any significant amounts until the blood level reaches 100 times what the thyroid needs. Most people do not produce enough stomach acid as they grow older. I firmly believe low gastric acidity can be caused by iodine deficiency, as iodine promotes stomach acidity!

**Breast, ovarian, and skin cysts** — In addition to fixing almost all cases of breast cysts, iodine also has a remarkable healing effect on ovarian cysts, and even on skin cysts. (For the latter, I recommend rubbing in iodine right over the cyst.)

**Dementia and glaucoma** — Iodine is found in large amounts in the brain (including the parts of the brain associated with Parkinson's disease) and the ciliary body of the eye, a possible factor in glaucoma.

**Other illnesses** — Iodine reduces the dangerous activity of lipoprotein(a). When elevated, this protein can lead to excessive blood clotting and vascular disease. Iodine has been used successfully in headaches, keloid formation, parotid duct stones, and Dupuytren's and Peyronie's contractures. Doses up to six times the RDA have been used safely for months to combat the excessive mucous in chronic lung diseases.

Now that I've shown you how important iodine is to your health, it's time for you to find out if you're deficient. Actually, you already know that you probably are deficient, but there are times when you might need to know for sure. There is a test now that's far more accurate and is fairly inexpensive.

The test was developed by Dr. Abraham and is called a loading test. With this procedure, the doctor administers four iodine tablets. If your body has all the iodine it needs, you would expect to urinate out most of the ingested amount over the next 24 hours. If not, your body would hold on to a significant amount of the iodine and you would know that you're deficient.

**But I'm not sure you need the test.** David Brownstein, MD, author of the wonderful new book *Iodine*, also was performing loading tests on his patients. However, Dr. Brownstein and I stopped most of the tests after nearly every test we performed returned positive for deficiency. Now I just start iodine supplementation in any condition where iodine is a known factor.

I do recommend a test under certain circumstances. If you're taking an iodine supplement for several months and experience no clinical results, you might have a problem with absorption. That's when a test should be performed. It commonly takes three months of supplementation to get sufficient levels.

Another illness that might require a test is cancer. We know iodine deficiency is a factor in breast and prostate cancer, so there's no need to test. Other cancers probably warrant taking the test even though deficiency is likely. It would be good for the doctor to have a baseline to monitor your condition.

Just how likely is deficiency in cancer? In an in-house study, 60 cancer patients (various types) were given the iodine-loading test and then measured for urinary excretion. All 60 patients were found to be seriously deficient in body stores of iodine and some had great excesses of bromine. The best case excreted only 50 percent of the load and the worst excreted only 20 percent (that means they were retaining a very high 80 percent). Folks, these are some serious numbers. One hundred percent of these cancer sufferers were deficient in iodine! I assure you the problem is population wide.

Your doctor can administer the test very easily, or you can contact Dr. Flechas (828-684-3233), who offers the iodine-loading test for only \$75. His iodine website is [www.helpmythyroid.com/iodine.htm](http://www.helpmythyroid.com/iodine.htm).

If you're deficient and think iodized salt is your answer, I can assure you it's not. First, the amount of iodine (as potassium iodide) added is relatively small. You will need a minimum of 100 grams of iodized salt daily (20 tsp) to get adequate levels. Even saltaholics can't eat this much salt.

Dr. Abraham has developed a convenient iodine/iodide preparation you can take by pill instead of the usually unpleasant Lugol's solution. Called **Iodoral**, a tablet is quite literally dried Lugol's solution, providing 12.5 mg of iodine/iodide. In his research, Dr. Abraham found that a person abundant in iodine should excrete at least 90 percent, over the next 24 hours, of a loading dose of four tablets (50 mg). If you excrete less, that means your body needs and is retaining it. Dr. Abraham believes the dose of iodine for maintaining sufficiency of the whole body is at least 13 mg per day (100 times the paltry RDA) – six mg for the thyroid, five mg for the breasts, and two mg for the rest of the body. Men would likely need less, though not always.

Not everyone needs this much, though. Take Betty for example. She visited me with complaints of terribly painful and cystic breasts. She often had to shoo her husband away. Simply providing iodide at a level of five mg per day completely reversed the problem and made her feel womanly and erogenous again.

Of course, some people need more. Veronica, 46, limped in on crutches with stage-IV breast cancer with severe pain in her hip from an advanced metastasis. She received IPT, artemisinin, and nutritional supplements, which checked the disease. Her iodine-loading test showed great deficiency. After three months of Iodoral, her iodine level had not yet come up, but her excretion of bromide had increased 10 times. She now receives only occasional IPT, and is still stable on several nutritional supplements including Iodoral (six daily — 75 mg). Dr. Abraham tells me he also has seen two apparent remissions of breast cancer from the use of Iodoral —two tablets, three times daily.

Another physician has a case of prostate cancer in apparent remission with the addition of Iodoral and other supplements. George Flechas, MD reports that many of his diabetes cases need lowered insulin or drugs when taking "sufficient" iodine. I have seen the same!

Some people may see alteration in their thyroid blood tests or require adjustment in their thyroid medication and iodine dose. Medical supervision is suggested.

**For Iodine studies visit [www.optimox.com](http://www.optimox.com)**

Recommended Book:

**Iodine: Why You Need it, Why You Can't Live Without It** by Dr. David Brownstein

[www.drbrownstein.com](http://www.drbrownstein.com)

## ***Iodine Deficiency***

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Dr. David Brownstein has a US medical practice dealing primarily with thyroid patients. He has been quite successful treating hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism with the iodine/iodide supplement **Iodoral** that is available without prescription. Dr. Brownstein believes that the usual thyroid medication prescribed by doctors is the wrong treatment because it does not deal with the underlying iodine deficiency problem.

All cells in the body need iodine for proper functioning. All glands (thyroid, adrenal, etc.) especially need iodine for the production of hormones. Dr. Brownstein believes that iodine deficiency is a major cause of breast cancer and other diseases of the reproductive organs such as ovarian, uterus and prostate cysts and cancers. Iodine levels in US soil have fallen 50 per cent over the past 50 years and soil in the US is deficient in iodine. The Great Lakes region has some of the lowest soil iodine levels in the world and this results in high levels of cancers related to iodine deficiency. Dr. Brownstein has been quite successful in treating fibrocystic breast disease (cysts in the breast) with iodine/iodine supplementation. In one case a 37 year-old woman with severe fibrocystic breast disease was completely cured after supplementing with 50 mgs of iodine a day for two months. Women with larger breasts need more iodine than women with smaller breasts. Other medical authorities agree that iodine deficiency can lead to fibrocystic breast disease and/or ovarian cysts. [1] [2] [3]

Iodine can similarly reduce uterine fibroids and one of the first conventional medical treatments for severe fibroids was to paint the uterus with iodine. [4]

Some other medical conditions associated with iodine deficiency are goiters, Graves Disease, Hashimoto's Disease, fatigue and impaired immune system function. Iodine deficiency during pregnancy can lead to miscarriages and reduced IQ in surviving offspring. [5]

The World Health Organization says that iodine deficiency is the largest single cause of mental retardation. Iodine also detoxifies the body by removing mercury, fluorides, chlorides, and bromides.

If iodine/iodide are so crucial in the body, why hasn't there been more research studies published? Dr. Brownstein believes that because iodine cannot be patented there is no incentive for the drug companies to perform the research.

Iodized salt and the iodine supplements usually found in health food stores contain the iodide form of iodine. Dr. Brownstein has had little success treating patients with only iodide. The supplement Iodoral contains both the iodide (reduced) and iodine (oxidized) forms of iodine because the body needs both forms. The US RDA for iodine is 150 mcg. Iodoral contains 100 times (12.5 mgs) the RDA's requirement of iodine/iodide.

It seems the conventional medical establishment again has grossly underestimated the amount of a nutrient needed for good health. According to Dr. G. E. Abraham, "Of all the elements known so far to be essential for health, iodine is the most misunderstood and the most feared. Yet, it is by far the safest of all the trace elements known to be essential for human health. It is the only trace element that can be ingested safely in amounts up to 100,000 times the RDA. For example, potassium iodide has been prescribed safely to pulmonary patients in daily amounts of up to 6.0 gm/day, in large groups of such patients for several years. It is important however to emphasize that this safety record only applies to inorganic non-radioactive iodine/iodide, not to organic iodine-containing drugs and to radioiodides." [6]

Seafood and sea plants such as kelp (seaweed) are good dietary sources of iodine but few people in the US consume enough of these foods. The usual dosage as a supplement is one tablet a day but up to four tablets a day can be taken for medical conditions under a knowledgeable MD's supervision.

For those interested in knowing more about iodine's function in preventing and treating diseases, four of Dr. Brownstein's video clips located at <http://vitamincfoundation.org/videos>. Dr. Brownstein's home page and links to his books are located at <http://www.drbrownstein.com/iodine.shtml>.

His books include *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It*, *Overcoming Thyroid Disorders* and *Salt: Your Way to Health* which encourages consumption of sea salt in order to obtain many trace minerals.

Informative research papers about iodine are at

[http://www.optimox.com/pics/Iodine/opt\\_Research\\_1.shtml](http://www.optimox.com/pics/Iodine/opt_Research_1.shtml).

Iodine deficiency may be a major contributor to the widespread arthritis problems in the US. A home remedy for arthritis is consumption of two drops of Lugol's solution each day. Two drops of **Lugol's solution** contain the same amount of iodine as one **Iodorol** tablet. Lugol's solution is a water solution of 10 per cent potassium iodide and 5 per cent iodine.

Hormones control body weight. Malfunctioning glandular systems due to iodine deficiency may be a major cause of the overweight problem in the US.

References:

[1] J. D. Flechas, MD, <http://www.helpmythyroid.com/iodine.htm>

[2] Abraham, G. E., Flechas, J. D., Hakala, J. C., *Orthiodosupplementation: Iodine sufficiency of the whole human body*, <http://www.helpmythyroid.com/IOD-02.html>

[3] James Howenstine, MD, *Iodine is vital for good health*  
<http://www.newswithviews.com/Howenstine/james37.htm>

[4] Herb and Supplement Encyclopedia,  
<http://www.florahealth.com/flora/home/canada/healthinformation/encyclopedias/Iodine.asp>

[5] Iodine Deficiency Disorder, <http://indorgs.virginia.edu/iccidd/aboutidd.htm>

[6] G. E. Abraham, MD, *The safe and effective implementation of orthiodosupplementation in medical practice*. <http://www.helpmythyroid.com/IOD50.htm>