What is iodine?
Iodine is an essential nutrient the body needs for a healthy thyroid and for normal growth and development.
Iodine is very important during pregnancy and breastfeeding for the normal development of a baby’s brain and nervous system.
Too little iodine can cause learning problems for babies and children. It can also affect their physical development and hearing.

How much iodine do we need?
The body only needs iodine in very small amounts.
Although only small amounts are needed we need to eat foods high in iodine regularly because we cannot store large amounts in the body.

What foods is iodine found in?
Dairy milk and yoghurt.
Bread baked with iodised salt. Most commercial bread in Australia now contains iodised salt, check the ingredients list or ask the baker. Organic bread and bread mixes for making bread at home are not required to contain iodised salt. The manufacturer may choose to use it; check the ingredients list.
Seafood such as flathead, tuna and salmon (including tinned varieties), oysters and mussels, prawns and crayfish.
How do I make sure I get enough iodine?

Most people will get enough iodine from their diet if they eat bread and have dairy foods (e.g., milk or yoghurt) on most days of the week.

If you do not eat bread or have dairy foods on most days of the week then you may need to talk to your doctor about whether you are getting enough iodine.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women have increased iodine needs and will not get enough from food alone. They are advised to take an iodine supplement with 150 µg (micrograms) of iodine per day. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or considering becoming pregnant talk to your doctor or pharmacist about a suitable supplement.

Should I eat more salt?

No – don’t use more salt in cooking or at the table as salt may cause high blood pressure.

Choose lower salt foods where possible, e.g., ‘reduced salt’ or ‘no added salt’ tinned products.

Replace any salt you do use with iodised salt.

Further information

Contact your doctor or an accredited practising dietitian if you are concerned about your iodine intake.