

# Dear Pharmacist: Natural iodine is essential

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**Suzy Cohen**

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL

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**I**odine is essential for your thyroid, but is used all over your body, in all of your organs especially your breasts and prostate. Trillions of cells have a receptor site for iodine and need it. It is as natural (and needed) as other minerals like magnesium, lithium, potassium, selenium, etc. But many people wrongly assume it is radioactive.

Natural iodine is not the same as radioactive iodine, which is used in Graves' disease. The body cannot thrive without natural iodine. Here are some examples of how important natural iodine is to you:

Iodine has well-documented research when it comes to healthy breast tissue and women will often claim iodine alleviated fibrocystic breast pain or breast lumps.

Iodine may help shrink uterine fibroids; one of the first conventional treatments for severe fibroids was to paint a woman's uterus with iodine.

There's a correlation between reduced iodine and lower mental IQ.

Iodine deficiency is a risk factor for thyroid cancer. This has been shown in several papers and trials, most recently discussed in *Thyroid Research* (June 2015). The right amount of iodine is crucial; too little or too much will harm your thyroid, which sucks up iodine like a sponge. Low levels of iodine are known to cause or contribute to hypothyroidism, goiters and autoimmune thyroid disorders like Hashimoto's.

Iodine supports testicular and prostate health so it's important for men to get their levels tested and supplement if needed.

There is a lot of research done on breast, endometrial, and ovarian cancer and natural iodine. In 1976, *Lancet* concluded, "Increasing dietary iodine intake may reduce the risk of these cancers."

A developing fetus is particularly susceptible to brain damage if the pregnant mother is severely iodine deficient, so much so that there are global initiatives to fortify pregnant and lactating mothers with iodine to ensure healthy brain development.

Initiatives to fortify foods with iodine have been ongoing in New Zealand, Denmark, the UK and other countries where iodine is actually revered instead of feared.

Fortified "iodized" salt contains only iodide. The body needs iodine and iodide (both), and supplemental forms

may be more useful. The US RDA for iodine is 150 mcg (micrograms). In my opinion, that is not enough to support good health, and you can test your own levels with a urine iodine test.

Common drug muggers of iodine include fluoroquinolone antibiotics, cholesterol medicine and some antidepressants. Swimming pools may deplete levels.

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