Did you know there’s one simple mineral that we need every day that most of us never get? There was a time when it was considered a “cure all”, but we’ve forgotten all about it in favor of prescription drugs, and as a result, rates of cancer are skyrocketing, obesity is epidemic, and our energy levels have plunged.

That mineral is iodine, and it is the subject of this Terry Talks Nutrition®.

Iodine is one of nature’s most amazing minerals. Unfortunately for our health, it is one that has been largely forgotten. But it wasn’t always that way.

Before the widespread use of synthetic drugs, iodine was recommended for everything: healing wounds and disease, destroying bacteria and viruses, and possibly even preventing cancer.

But in the 1940s, a single paper written by two researchers completely changed the way we use iodine. This poorly documented paper gave the impression that iodine use was not only archaic and unnecessary, but could even be dangerous, citing hyperthyroidism as a side effect. Almost overnight, the use of iodine in medicine was stopped and in its place we have a fear of one of the most important and critical nutrients in our diet. Iodine costs just pennies a day. With the advent of modern drugs in the 1940s and 1950s, could the profits realized by the drug companies have a bearing on discrediting the use of iodine for hypothyroidism?

Compounding the issue is the fact that people have cut back on table salt at home, and the nature of processed foods. Most food manufacturers don’t use iodized salt, and their products – especially frozen pizzas, appetizers, and processed meats – are laden with unhealthy types of sodium instead.

But new pharmaceuticals brushed iodine aside, and we see the result – high rates of cancer, thyroid dysfunction, and a build-up of toxins in our bodies – many of them from the foods we eat and water we drink.

Where Did Iodine Go?
Iodine as a medicine was once very common, but dietary iodine intake in many parts of the country was historically quite low. It wasn’t until after the First World War that medical professionals advocated for iodine enrichment in the diet.

Because most of us think we get enough iodine from table salt, it’s easy to forget that iodine was added to salt to reduce incidence of goiter (enlarged thyroid gland) back in the 1920s. And that worked, for a while.

HERE ARE MY SUGGESTIONS:

For General Iodine Supplementation:
3.0-12.5 mg daily

Note: Integrative practitioners often suggest 50 mg per day for 3 months followed by 3.0-12.5 mg daily thereafter for optimal health. However, it’s best to find a practitioner that can help you develop a regimen that’s perfectly tailored for you.

For Thyroid Support:
A combination of 15-30 mg of three forms of iodine along with 200-400 mg of l-tyrosine daily, depending on your situation.

For Additional Thyroid Support:
If after a few months your progress seems to have stalled, you might want to consider adding 150-300 mcg of selenium in addition to the 15-30 mg of iodine and 200-400 mg of l-tyrosine daily.

If you feel tired all the time, have gained weight, can’t tolerate cold, have dry skin, and worry about breast, prostate, or thyroid cancer, there is a natural solution that can make a world of difference: iodine.

A strong daily supplement helps:
• Prevent breast, prostate, ovarian, and thyroid cancer
• Keep your weight low and your metabolism high
• Stop migraine headaches
• Boost energy and libido
• Stop “brain fog” and improve focus
• Improve dry, brittle hair, and cracked skin
• Stop food cravings

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Are You Hypothyroid? You Need Iodine!

That’s because chlorine, fluoride, and bromide – which lower iodine levels in the body by blocking iodine receptors – are increasingly consumed from foods or through environmental exposure.

Iodine is Making a Comeback – And We Need It!
Fortunately, not everyone has forgotten what this amazing mineral can do. Integrative medical practitioners and other holistic-thinking individuals are bringing iodine back. And science is recognizing iodine’s great value, too. Researchers suggest that boosting iodine consumption could improve thyroid health, lower incidence of breast and prostate cancer and fibrocystic disease of the breast, and promote overall well-being.

Of course, our minimum daily requirement is still set far too low – only 150 micrograms (mcg) per day. This is enough to prevent goiter, but not enough for truly beneficial health effects. And there’s nothing scary about getting more iodine in your system. After all, people in Japan consume more than 12 mg – 12,000 mcg – of iodine per day. That’s 50 times more than the average American, and it hasn’t hurt a bit.

Iodine Helps Stop Cancer
Iodine’s anti-cancer functions are one of its most important benefits. Scientific tests using estrogen-sensitive breast cancer cells exposed to iodine have shown that they are less likely to grow and spread. Fibrocystic breast disease is also a common concern, and creates swelling, tenderness, and discomfort. In other clinical research, approximately 70% of patients experienced relief of pain and reduction in abnormal tissue with iodine supplementation. In patients with mastalgia – breast pain – at least 50% of the women had significant reductions in breast pain after taking 6 mg of iodine each day.

Although seen as “harmless” fluoride added to water is a toxin that reduces the body’s ability to absorb the iodine, disrupting thyroid hormones and possibly contributing to cancer risk.

Chlorine is now used to purify water instead of iodine. Fluoride is almost universally found in toothpaste and drinking water. And bromide replaced iodine in commercial baked goods over 30 years ago. Unfortunately, these minerals aren’t just toxic for your thyroid – they’re dangerous for your health overall. Fluoride is a problem because it blocks the ability of the thyroid gland to concentrate iodine and bromide can cause depression, headaches, and even hallucinations.

Additionally, consuming soy and gluten blocks thyroid function and inhibits the uptake of iodine. You find these ingredients not only in obvious sources like soy milk and wheat breads, but also as hidden ingredients in many processed foods. They are another reason why we are so deficient in iodine.

Studies have noted a connection between thyroid abnormalities and breast cancer, and iodine intake may be a factor. Today, one in eight American women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. Compare that to thirty years ago, when iodine consumption was much higher, and one in 20 women developed breast cancer. Women in Japan who consume high amounts of dietary iodine have much lower rates of breast cancer and thyroid problems. However, when women emigrate from Japan to the United States and begin eating a Western diet, with its fractional amount of iodine, their breast cancer and thyroid disease rates increase dramatically.
In another study, 98% of women receiving iodine treatment were pain-free by the study’s end, and 72% had improvements in breast tissue.

**Why Iodine Can Help Prevent Breast and Prostate Cancer**

Iodine works so well for breast health because it makes breast cells less sensitive to estrogen, and detoxifies toxic halogens – bromide, fluoride, and chloride. It’s important that you help your body flush out these harmful elements: one study found that breast cancer patients had double the bromide levels compared to non-cancer patients.

For the same reasons, iodine helps prevent the hormonal imbalances that leave some men more prone to prostate cancer. After all, women and men are equally subject to the estrogen-like chemicals so prevalent in modern packaging, home and office furnishings, and foods.

**Different Forms of Iodine for Different Reasons**

Supplemental iodine is available in different forms, each of which affects specific tissues in the body. Potassium and sodium iodide are best absorbed by the thyroid. Breast tissue uses iodine most efficiently in the form of molecular iodine.

Because of this, you need a supplement that includes more than one form of the mineral. The best formula provides three forms of iodine – sodium iodide, potassium iodide, and molecular iodine – at levels that can actually make a noticeably positive difference.

Dr. David Brownstein, M.D., is an author and iodine expert who has treated thousands of patients in his clinic. He states, “As I started to use larger amounts of iodine (12.5-50 mg/day) to achieve whole body sufficiency, I began to see positive results in my patients. Goiters and nodules of the thyroid shrank, cysts on the ovaries became smaller and began to disappear, patients reported increased energy, and metabolism was increased as evidenced by my patients having new success in losing weight. Libido improved in both men and women. People suffering from brain fog reported a clearing of the fogginess. Patients reported having vivid dreams and sleeping better. Most importantly, those with chronic illnesses that were having a difficult time improving began to notice many of their symptoms resolving.”

**What the Thyroid Does**

This butterfly-shaped gland sits at the base of the throat. One of the chief functions of the thyroid is the production of the hormone, thyroxine (T4), and the conversion of this hormone into triiodothyronine (T3) as needed for metabolism.

However, things can go bad if the body produces too little thyroxine to begin with. Normal metabolic and other chemical processes slow down, and you have hypothyroidism or low thyroid.

Low functioning thyroids are common in both men and women, although from my experience, women are far more apt to have hypothyroidism than men. But diagnosing hypothyroidism isn’t always what it should be. The most serious problem is that many doctors rely completely on a blood test that is grossly inaccurate and overlooks a majority of low thyroid function diagnoses.

**Why Most Thyroid Tests Don’t Provide the Full Picture**

When doctors test for blood levels of T4, they generally find adequate levels of the hormone, so they naturally rule out hypothyroidism. But focusing on T4 levels only provides half of the picture, and the tests aren’t truly far-reaching. Many of these “good” readings of T4 don’t take into consideration the levels of T4 that need to be converted to T3, the active hormone.

In fact, readings of TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone), thyroxine levels, and other blood parameters may lead one to believe you are in the “normal” range when the normal range may be far too broad. A test initiated by Dr. Broda Barnes, considered to be one of the premier experts on thyroid, is far better. Plus, it has the added convenience of being able to be performed at home.

The procedure is simple:

• Take a non-digital thermometer and place it on your bedside table.
In the morning upon wakening – without getting out of bed – place the thermometer in your armpit and hold arm close to body for 10 minutes.

Read temperature and record (women in menstruation should wait for ovulation to cease)

Repeat procedure each day for three days

Normal is between 97.8 and 98.2 degrees Fahrenheit.

Anything under 97.8 probably means varying degrees of hypothyroidism. The lower the temperature, the worse the condition. In some cases, it's not unusual to find readings as low as 96 degrees.

Unfortunately, in many cases of hypothyroidism, doctors fall back on the catchall diagnoses: stress, anxiety, or depression, because these are symptoms of the real disease. They overlook the root cause of these symptoms.

Let me emphasize the fact that low thyroid is very serious. Beyond weight gain, disruptions to the health of the thyroid can alter your personality significantly, completely taking away the enjoyment of life and eventually leading to depression, anxiety, and anti-social behavior.

**L-Tyrosine – Required for Your Thyroid**

You may not hear about L-tyrosine that much, but without it there would be no hormone function and the adrenals would also be severely affected.

L-tyrosine, also known simply as “tyrosine”, is a natural amino acid found in legumes, cheese, and many protein-rich foods. It is a must for creating thyroid hormones, and that's why you may need it in supplemental form – especially if your diet is a bit shy of food sources.

The thyroid gland uses two major building blocks to make thyroid hormone—iodine and L-tyrosine. Insufficient levels of either nutrient cause a decrease in the formation of the thyroid hormones **thyroxine (T4)** and **triiodothyronine (T3)**.

Of course, L-tyrosine isn’t only involved with thyroid hormone production – it also helps produce noradrenaline and dopamine. But it is impossible to have a well-functioning thyroid without sufficient quantities in the diet or through supplementation. Due to L-tyrosine’s role in creating neurochemicals, it's probably no surprise that this amino acid is an excellent stress reliever and a natural treatment for depression as well.

**Selenium – The Other Crucial Mineral for Your Thyroid**

Selenium is a critical mineral for overall health, and your thyroid needs it in addition to iodine and L-tyrosine. While selenium can be obtained from regular dietary sources, some people need that extra mineral “push” in order to get their thyroid hormones to activate properly. In the case of autoimmune disorders and their relationship to the thyroid, selenium may be the next most important mineral for the health of the gland, right after iodine.

If you have been trying to rejuvenate your thyroid with iodine and L-tyrosine, and even after a few months, your progress seems to have stalled, I would recommend adding selenium to your regimen, or finding a supplement that combines iodine, L-tyrosine, and selenium.

**Thyroid Health Really is That Important!**

It's easy to be fooled into thinking that just one small system in the body can be allowed to “slow down a little”, but thyroid health is extremely important.

The thyroid regulates the complete metabolic function of the body. Any dysfunction will make a tremendous impact on how much weight you carry, and how easy (or not) it is to regulate that weight. Plus, an imbalance of its hormone can produce skin disorders, irregular heartbeat, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, muscle dysfunction, gastrointestinal disturbances, mental confusion, severe depression, decreased libido, extreme fatigue, and apathy. But I think you get the idea. The thyroid very definitely affects how you feel and how you relate to life in general.

**Supplementing with Iodine**

There's a fear surrounding iodine and iodine supplementation that is completely unfounded, but it's important to get iodine in different forms – including molecular iodine, sodium iodide, and potassium iodide – for more complete whole-body effects.

Remember, iodine was routinely used by physicians until the late 1930's at doses of 37 mg or more per day, depending upon the disorder. Aside from thyroid, recent research has proven that all cells have a receptor site for iodine, in particular the breast, prostate, ovaries, and uterus, which require iodine in order to function properly.

The right dosage truly depends on individual needs. Unfortunately, like many healthy nutrients, the reported amount for a suggested intake is only enough to prevent goiter. Integrative practitioners often suggest 50 mg per day for 3 months followed by 6.25 or 12.5 mg daily thereafter for optimal health. However, it's best to find a practitioner that can help you develop a regimen that's perfectly tailored for you. Look for supplements that provide these dosage levels so you get exactly the amount you need.

The ingredients I’d recommend more specifically for thyroid concerns include a combination of 15-30 mg of three forms of iodine along with 200-400 mg of L-tyrosine daily, depending on your situation. It may take 3-6 months to fully restore the thyroid and its metabolic function, so please be patient. After all, you may have inherited this condition. If after a few months your

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DO YOU NEED IODINE?
Test Yourself For Iodine Deficiency:

The following is a list of symptoms that may be experienced by someone with low or deficient iodine levels. This is not a diagnostic test. It is meant as a nutritional guide to raise awareness of suboptimal iodine levels. It may also help you determine whether you should have further discussions with your healthcare practitioner for clinical testing.

Please read each descriptive symptom and check off any that describe how you feel.

SYMPTOM

☐ I’m sensitive to cold. My hands and feet are always cold.
☐ In the morning, my face is puffy and my eyelids are swollen.
☐ I put weight on easily.
☐ I have dry skin.
☐ I have trouble getting up in the morning.
☐ I feel more tired at rest than when I’m active.
☐ I’m constipated.
☐ My joints are stiff in the morning.
☐ I feel like I’m living in slow motion.
☐ I have foggy brain.
☐ The outer 1/3 of my eyebrows is missing.
☐ My lips are swollen and protruding, particularly the lower lip.
☐ I have ringing in the ears.
☐ My hair is coarse and falls out, it is dry, brittle, and slow growing.
☐ My hair is dull and lusterless.
☐ I have frequency of urination.
☐ I have impaired hearing.
☐ I have reduced initiative.
☐ My calves are big.
☐ My legs and ankles are swollen in the morning.
☐ My buttocks and thighs are too well padded, and when I look in the mirror, I’m pear shaped.
☐ I have high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
☐ My heart is weak and I have a weak heartbeat.
☐ My stomach sags and is pushed forward by the curvature of my spine.
☐ My body temperature is below 97.8

TOTAL __________

RESULTS

You said Yes to **12 or more** symptoms:
You would almost certainly benefit from iodine supplementation; check with your doctor to see if you have iodine or thyroid insufficiency.

You said Yes to **5 – 12** symptoms:
You may want to consider testing and would likely benefit from iodine supplementation.

You said Yes to **0 – 5** symptoms:
Although you have few symptoms you may want to consider taking iodine at a lower dosage for ongoing good health, disease prevention and detoxification.
progress seems to have stalled, you might want to consider adding 150-300 mcg of selenium daily to the iodine and L-tyrosine. I’d also highly recommend reading *Iodine Why You Need It, Why You Can’t Live Without It* and *Overcoming Thyroid Disorders* by Dr. David Brownstein. You can find them in your local health food store or on his website at www.drbrownstein.com.

**Boost Your Metabolism and Protect Your Health with Iodine**

If you’re extra-sensitive to cold, put on weight easily, have dry skin, or feel “foggy”, you may be deficient in iodine. Other signs include a thinning of the outer third of the eyebrows, stiff joints, and dull, lusterless hair. Sound like common symptoms? Of course they do – most people don’t get the iodine they need. They may wonder for years what exactly is “wrong”, until they restore the iodine levels their bodies are crying out for.

Fortunately, iodine supplementation either alone, or more specifically targeted with L-tyrosine for your thyroid, can make a big difference. And, if you have a family history of breast, uterine, or prostate cancer, you can help your body overcome the risk by getting the iodine you need.

Even with a “normal” thyroid test result, you may still have a host of symptoms. Fortunately, iodine and L-tyrosine can help.