

Food Sources:

Iodine

Iodine is a trace element required for the body, particularly for the production of thyroid hormones. Because the iodine content of farming soil varies considerably, it is difficult to determine the precise iodine content of foods.

The highest iodine concentration occurs in the soil of coastal areas. Because of this, seaweed and seafood are the highest natural sources of this important micronutrient. Dairy products are a good dietary source of iodine because of iodine-containing disinfectants used on milking equipment.

It is important to have a healthy level of iodine in your body, as there are health risks associated with having too little or too much iodine in the body. If a person has too little iodine, thyroid hormone production is reduced. This can result in goiters, hypothyroidism, and development problems in infants and children. Excess iodine can cause the same problems as too little iodine, as well as hyperthyroidism or thyroiditis.

Talk to your functional medicine practitioner before starting an iodine-containing supplement, as it may be too much and can interfere with certain medications.

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for iodine are as follows:

- **Adults:** 150 micrograms (mcg) per day
- **Pregnancy:** 220 mcg per day
- **Lactation:** 27 mcg per day
- **Tolerable upper limit:** 1100 mcg per day

Food, standard serving size	Average Iodine Content (in micrograms)
Seaweed, 1 gram dried	16- 2984*
Cod, baked, 3 ounces	158
Plain nonfat Greek yogurt, 8 ounces	116
Oysters, cooked, 3 ounces	93
Cow's milk, 8 ounces	85
Iodized salt, ¼ teaspoon	76
Egg, 1 large	26
Cheddar cheese, 1.5 ounces	21
Wild salmon, cooked, 3 ounces	14
Shrimp, cooked, 3 ounces	13

*The iodine content of seaweed greatly varies depending on the type and location where it was harvested. In general, nori tends to be lower in iodine while kombu tends to be the highest in iodine.

REFERENCES

1. Zeisel SH, Mar MH, Howe JC, Holden JM. Concentrations of choline-containing compounds and betaine in common foods. *J Nutr.* 2003; 133(5): 1302-1307
2. Oregon State University, Linus Pauling Institute. Micronutrient Information Center. Choline. <https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/other-nutrients/choline>. Updated January 2015. Accessed May 18, 2020.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements. Dietary Supplements for Exercise and Athletic Performance. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/ExerciseAndAthleticPerformance-HealthProfessional/#betaine>. Updated October 2019. Accessed May 18, 2020.

