

Iodine: An Essential Mineral for Thyroid Health

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IODINE: AN ESSENTIAL MINERAL FOR THYROID HEALTH

Thyroid Function And Why Is It So Important?

The primary function of the thyroid is to regulate the metabolism of all the cells in the body. The thyroid affects how many calories we burn, how warm we feel, and how much we weigh. By converting iodine and the amino acid tyrosine into thyroid hormones, thyroxin (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3), the thyroid has a direct effect on most organs, including the heart, which beats faster and harder under the influence of thyroid hormones. Essentially, all cells in the body will respond to increases in thyroid hormone with an increase in the rate at which they function.

What Controls Thyroid Function?

The thyroid gland is regulated by a series of hormonal secretions. The hypothalamus is a part of the brain, which secretes thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH), which stimulates the pituitary gland to secrete thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH). TSH from the pituitary gland stimulates the thyroid to manufacture and secrete T4 and T3 into the bloodstream. The thyroid relies on the hypothalamus and pituitary gland to tell it how often and how much thyroid hormone to manufacture and secrete. Much like a person (hypothalamus) would alter the thermostat (pituitary gland) to change the temperature in a house (thyroid). Thyroid health is not only dependent on the proper functioning of the thyroid but also on adequate signals coming from the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland. If a person believes their thyroid health is being impaired, consult your primary care

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practitioner. A blood panel checking the ranges of TSH, T4 and T3 levels is helpful in understanding if the underlying cause is actually thyroid, pituitary gland, or ultimately hypothalamus related.

The Importance Of Iodine For Thyroid Health

Iodine is required by the thyroid to manufacture thyroid hormones T4 and T3. The thyroid through our diet acquires iodine. Until the 1960's iodine was used as a dough conditioner in store bought breads making it more readily consumed in the American diet. However, in the 1960's iodine was replaced with bromine, a halogen element, which along with other halogen elements, chlorine and fluorine, have the ability to displace iodine in the body. Women require iodine not only for the health of their thyroid but also the overall health of their uterus and breasts. In the 1960's breast cancer affected 1 in 20 women in the US. Today it affects 1 in 8 women. In studies of Japanese women and their low incidence of breast and reproductive cancer they found that the Japanese consumed on average 13mg of iodine daily. The RDA for iodine in the US is 150mcg, significantly lower than the average daily consumption of the Japanese. Iodine is found naturally in seaweeds such as dulse, nori, wakame, hijiki, arame, and kombu as well as fish and natural sea salt. A benefit of incorporating seaweed into the daily diet is that seaweeds have the ability to detoxify environmental pollutants as well as supplementing the body with iodine. For more information on natural approaches to thyroid health contact From Scratch Wellness Services for a naturopathic consultation.

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Jennifer Stanley, Traditional Naturopath, graduated from Midwest University of Naturopathic Medicine. Jennifer Stanley is certified through the American Naturopathic Certification Board as a Traditional Naturopath. She is also an I-ACT certified colon hydrotherapist. She owns From Scratch Wellness Services located within the Haven Wellness Center in St. Charles and also has an office in Mundelein. Jennifer Stanley offers naturopathic and customized nutritional consultations, colon hydrotherapy and manual lymphatic drainage. For more information contact Jennifer Stanley at 630-945-3867 or www.fromscratchwellness.com