

IODINE DEFICIENCY

Iodine deficiency is a leading cause of preventable brain damage worldwide.



WHY DO YOU NEED IODINE?

Iodine is essential for bone and brain development early in life.

It helps your body to produce thyroid hormones.

Your thyroid hormones are vital for a healthy metabolism...

...and help maintain a healthy body weight.

WHO IS MORE AT RISK?

Pregnant women
Women who are pregnant are thought to need about 50% more iodine than other women, to provide enough for their baby.

Women who breastfeed
Breastfed infants get their iodine from breast milk, so if a mother is not getting enough iodine, then her baby could also be iodine-deficient.

People who live in regions with iodine-deficient soil
Natural events such as flooding, heavy rainfall or glaciation can deplete iodine in soil. If soil is iodine-deficient, so are the grains and vegetables that are grown in it, making it difficult for people who rely on these crops for nutrition to get the iodine they need.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH?

Swollen neck
The most visible sign is often goitre – a swollen neck that is the result of an enlarged thyroid gland.

Lower IQ
Iodine deficiency is the single greatest preventable cause of reduced cognitive development in children. It can lead to stunted growth, impaired coordination and diminished performance at school. All of these problems can last a lifetime.

Risk of stillbirth
Serious iodine deficiency in pregnancy can result in stillbirth, increased risk of miscarriage, and congenital abnormalities such as cretinism, a condition that severely restricts mental and physical development and particularly affects people in iodine-deficient areas of Africa and Asia.

Lower productivity
The consequences of iodine deficiency in adulthood include impaired mental function and lower energy and productivity.

THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE IODINE DEFICIENCY IS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM HAS BEEN HALVED

A success story
The worldwide effort to provide universal access to iodine fortified salt, led by international organisations and governments, has been one of the major public health achievements of the 20th century.

Less than 20% of the world's population consumed iodised salt in the 1990s.

About 70% of the world's population consumed iodised salt by 2000.

120 Countries implemented salt iodisation programmes by 2006.

34 Countries achieved universal access to iodised salt by 2008.

75% of households globally were estimated to consume adequately iodised salt by 2013.

BUT RECENT ESTIMATES SUGGEST MILLIONS STILL REMAIN UNPROTECTED

54 countries are still iodine-deficient.

1 in 4 households globally are not consuming enough iodine.

35 million newborns in developing countries are vulnerable to brain damage associated with iodine deficiency disorders.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Continue with universal iodised salt programmes. According to the World Health Organization it only costs about **\$0.05** per person per year.

Encourage the consumption of iodine-rich foods such as seafood and dairy products.

Consider fortifying other foods with iodine.

The World Bank has estimated that every \$1 spent on prevention of iodine deficiency disorders yields a total productivity gain of \$28.

WHAT IS NESTLÉ DOING?

We've committed to providing **200 billion servings** of micronutrient fortified foods and beverages annually worldwide by 2016.

In 2014, **81%** of sales of our popularly positioned products (high-quality, nutritious foods and beverages at a price lower-income consumers can afford) were fortified with at least one of the 'big four' micronutrients: iron, iodine, vitamin A and zinc.

We use iodised salt in our Maggi culinary products, fortifying about **111 billion** individual servings of soups, seasonings and noodles in 2014.

Sources

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- Nestlé commitment: Help reduce the risk of undernutrition through micronutrient fortification <http://www.nestle.com/csv/nutrition/micronutrient-fortification>
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