

IODINE AND THE HALIDE FAMILY ON HEALTH

By David Graham RMT SMTO

The halide family consists of a group of elements including Iodine, fluorine, bromine and chlorine. In their non-elemental state they form various types of iodide, fluoride, bromide and chloride mineral compounds. Since the halide family are chemically similar to each other they compete for same receptors that are used to 'capture' iodine within the body; halides also compete for absorption within the body. Iodine/Iodide and chloride are the minerals that have a therapeutic affect on the body whilst fluoride and bromide are toxic.

Iodine is not very abundant in the earth's crust and most iodine is found in the oceans. Seaweed has the highest concentration of iodine; marine plants contain 500 – 8000 times more iodine than terrestrial plants. Research on kelp shows kelp absorbs increased amounts of iodine when placed under oxidative stress as a means of protecting itself. Other studies show that iodine increases antioxidant status of human blood serum.

Iodine occurs naturally in radioactive and non-radioactive forms. The radioactive form, which is toxic, is used in pharmaceutical drugs and for diagnosing and treating disease (i.e. thyroid cancer diagnosis and treatment). Exposing the body to radioactive iodine will make the body more deficient in natural iodine.

Iodine contains potent antibacterial, antiviral, anti-parasitic and anticancer properties. For example an iodine tincture is used to rub on a patient's skin prior to an operation killing 90% of the bacteria present within about 90 seconds. The International Speciality Product's brochure of their PVP-Iodine product shows a table of the time it takes to 'kill' different strains of bacteria, yeasts, moulds and viruses; most of them within seconds or a few minutes. None of the strains shown in the table are resistant to iodine, as many viruses, bacteria etc have become with disinfectants and antibiotics currently used today.

The glandular system of the body contains most Iodine; with the thyroid storing the most. However large amounts are stored in the salivary glands, cerebrospinal fluid, the brain (substantia nigra), gastric mucosa, choroid plexus, breasts, ovaries and the ciliary bodies of the eyes.

The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for iodine is 150 micrograms (μg) for adult males and females; however it is higher for lactating females at 290 μg . People in the United States consume an average of 240 μg a day, whereas people in Japan consume about 13 milligrams (mg) of iodine a day; a 50 fold increase through eating a diet high in seaweeds. Statistics show that the United States have one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the world, whereas Japan have one of the lowest. Also Japan has one of the highest life expectancies from the industrialized countries at 81 years old, compared to America of 77 years old.

The top researchers on iodine for health are Dr. Guy Abraham, Dr. Jorge Flechas and Dr. David Brownstein. The current medical view is that the body contains 25-50mg with about 75% of that iodine held in the thyroid gland. However Dr Abraham states that once the body is 'saturated' with sufficient iodine levels it should excrete 90% of the iodine ingested, through the urine. Dr Abraham created an iodine loading test where a person ingests 50mg of iodine in a single dose and measures the amount of iodine excreted in urine over the following 24 hour period. With this test most people retain most of the 50mg they ingest. Dr Abraham states most people have to take 50mg of iodine a day for several months until the body is sufficiently mineralized with iodine and 90% of the ingested iodine is excreted. When sufficiently mineralised, the body will hold 1500mg of iodine with only 3% of the total amount stored in the thyroid gland.

Drs. Abraham, Flechas and Brownstein have tested more than 4,000 patients with daily iodine doses ranging from 12.5mg to 50mg; patients with diabetes took up to 100mg a day. The results showed that "iodine does indeed reverse fibrocystic disease; their diabetic patients require less insulin; hypothyroid patients require less thyroid medication; symptoms of fibromyalgia resolve; and patients with migraine headaches stop having them." Dr Brownstein's research shows that after just one day of supplementing with 50mg of iodine, bromine excretion increased by 50% and fluoride excretion by 78% in urine respectively. All of the Doctors state that if iodine is used in conjunction with magnesium chloride and selenium then they see better results overall and this is recommended for overall safer detoxification.

Breasts require a large amount of iodine in milligram amounts per day to remain healthy. Women with goiters (a visible non-cancerous enlargement of the thyroid gland) have statistically three times greater incidence of breast cancer. Women with goiters also have more associations with cancers of the stomach, esophagus, ovaries and uterus. Thyroid disorders are more common in women than in men, possibly because the breasts require large amounts of iodine, thus making other parts of the female body more deficient. Iodine has been the most researched mineral in treating fibrocystic breast disease, yet a leading book in breast disease, Bland and Copeland's "The Breast: Comprehensive Management of Benign and Malignant Disorders" (2003), fails to mention iodine in any of its 1,766 pages.

Iodine induces programmed cell death also known as apoptosis. Programmed cell death is essential for destroying cells which are a threat to the human body; i.e. cancer cells and cells that are infected with viruses. Dermatologists treat inflammatory dermatosis with SSKI (Supersaturated Potassium Iodide) with starting doses of 900mg a day and continuing up to 6 grams a day as tolerated by the patient. Fungal eruptions are treated initially in gram amounts with great success.

Physicians for many years treated bronchial asthma with several grams of iodine a day (on and off) with good results. Iodine tends to be attracted to the mucous membranes, keeping them healthy; the mucous membranes are one of the body's most important defence systems.

In the United States in the early 1900s in the states bordering the Great Lakes, a large study showed that 40% of children examined had enlarged thyroids; known as goitre. In 1924 iodized salt was introduced to the area and by 1928 there was a 75% reduction in goitre. With the continuation of iodized salts, by 1951 only 0.5% of school-aged children had goitre.

In the 1960s iodine was used in the commercial baking industry as a dough conditioner and each slice of bread contained about 150µg of iodine; the average American was consuming over 700µg of iodine a day from bakery products alone. Researchers in the early 1980s thought that this may cause problems with the thyroid gland and the iodine conditioner was replaced with a bromine conditioner instead. Bromine is a known "goitrogen" promoting goiter in the body and will both compete with iodine for absorption and replace iodine if insufficient iodine is not present in the diet. Since the 1980s breast cancer rates in the U.S. has more than doubled.

Iodine removes the toxic halides (fluoride and bromide) from the body causing side effects such as Iodism. Iodism symptoms include a runny nose and acne-like skin lesions, caused by bromide which the iodine extracts and expels from the body through urine. If iodism symptoms occur then the person taking iodine is advised to decrease iodine intake to slow down the bromide detoxification process within the tissues. People on high iodine supplementation appear to have increase levels of lead, mercury, cadmium and aluminium in urine, thus iodine seems to act as a heavy metal chelator.

The intestinal tract cannot convert iodine into iodide therefore it is important to take sufficient amounts of the mineral in both forms: iodine and iodide. In the body some organs primary concentrate iodine (breasts and prostate) whereas others concentrate iodide (thyroid and skin); other organs such as kidneys, spleen, liver, blood, salivary glands and intestine have the ability to concentrate both forms.

The cheapest form of iodine is Lugol's iodine solution which contains 10% total iodine (with 10% potassium iodide and 5% elemental iodine) with each drop containing 6.5mg of iodine. Lugol's solution was first made in 1829 and "tincture of iodine" was listed in the U.S. Pharmacopeia in 1830. Iodoral® tablets can be bought in a 13mg or 50mg tablets form; the 13mg tablet contains the same amount of iodine/iodide and the exact same forms of iodine/iodide as 2 drops of Lugol's iodine solution.

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Genuine Lugol's iodine solution (at 6.5mg of iodine per drop) can be purchased on the internet however it is difficult to obtain elsewhere. Full strength Lugol's solution was available 'over the counter' in the United States until August 2007 when the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) made it illegal to purchase; although 30ml bottles of full strength Lugol's are available on the internet. The DEA stated Lugol's was being used in the illegal drug making of methamphetamine. Genuine Lugol's iodine solution is also now more difficult to obtain in other countries, with solutions that contain up to 15 times less total iodine only available 'over the counter', thus making the liquid/solution much less effective in treating certain conditions.

From 1900 to 1960 many U.S physicians used Lugol's iodine solution for all human ailments. In many cases patients simply got better by taking their iodine supplements. Doctors no longer use Lugol's iodine solution for ailments and instead the radioactive form of iodine is used.

Dr. Mercola, who runs the world's most popular natural health website and newsletter mercola.com recommends people attend their doctors and ask for a SSKI (Supersaturated Potassium Iodide) prescription. He advises people to rub two to three drops on the skin (for absorption) on a daily basis until the body is fully saturated with iodine; the quicker the solution absorbs into the skin, then the more deficient the person is in iodine. He also recommends to rub the solution onto children's and baby's skin.

Fluoride added to drinking water is not pharmaceutical grade fluoride, but rather a waste product from the phosphate fertilizer industries, mostly located in Florida (U.S.A) and China. Two toxic gases (hydrogen fluoride and silicon tetrafluoride) are captured from the industry's smoke stacks using a water spray, which creates a 'wet-slurry' known as hexafluorosilicic acid. This solution is added to about 50% of the United States (along with other many other countries) municipal public water supply, diluted to about 1ppm (parts per million) to promote healthy teeth. A standard tube of toothpaste contains about 150 small 'pee-sized' amounts of toothpaste; we are informed to use a 'pee-sized' amount for brushing. Calculated out each one of these 'pee-sized' amounts contains about a ¼ mg of fluoride; the same amount of fluoride in a 250ml glass of fluoridated tap water. On the back of toothpaste tubes it states that if more than a 'pee-sized' amount is swallowed, to call poison control, yet a 250ml glass of fluoridated tap water (which contains the same amount of fluoride), if ingested is promoted as a healthy addition to the water.

The fluoride content in mother's breast milk is about 0.004ppm for women drinking fluoridated and non-fluoridated water; the baby is naturally protected from fluoride in the breast milk. Whereas iodine is strongly and actively highly concentrated in the mammary ducts of breasts and in breast milk to benefit the feeding infant; the milk containing four times more iodine that is taken up by the thyroid. The breasts are one of the body's main storage sites for iodine.

Iodine is a heart stimulant therefore if heart palpitations occur when supplementing with iodine then other stimulants (i.e. caffeine) can be decreased. Also some people cannot generally tolerate so much iodine so if reactions occur whilst taking it, then it is advised to begin introducing iodine to the body gradually. A simple method of testing for an under-active thyroid is to test the body temperature (taken under the tongue) upon wakening. The temperature should be 36.5°C or higher, otherwise the thyroid is likely to be underactive. Females are best to take the temperature before ovulation begins for a more accurate result.

We are now subjected to an increase in many pollutants such as bromine and fluoride which are widely used in water fluoridation, pesticides, toothpastes, anti-biotics, clothing, crop fumigation (spraying growing crops and also in the storage period) and the pharmaceutical industry to name only a few. Therefore now there is a time for increased amounts of iodine in the diet than ever before, to increase overall general health of people and help them detoxify from the unhealthy halides. Perhaps we should take the Japanese approach and eat more seaweed in our diet or at least supplement with an appropriate iodine formula for optimum health and 'well being'.

David Graham is a Remedial and Sports Massage therapist practicing in Aberdeenshire. He is currently studying on the Advanced Remedial Massage Diploma course and can be contacted on 07765 454345.

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