

Annex: Joint Recommendation on Iodine Intake for pregnant and lactating women

Iodine is an essential micronutrient required for normal thyroid function, growth and development. If iodine deficiency exists during the critical period from the second trimester of pregnancy to the third year after birth, the brain and central nervous system of the baby will have irreversible derangement. Pregnant and lactating women are particularly vulnerable to iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) due to the increased daily requirement. From children's nutrition and health perspective, the following recommendations on iodine intake for pregnant and lactating women are made so as to meet their daily requirement of 250 µg iodine:

Take an iodine-containing supplement daily

- Pregnant and lactating women are recommended to take iodine-containing supplements regularly and they should check the iodine content of the supplement to make sure that they have at least 150 µg iodine each day. They should seek advice from healthcare professionals if they have doubt.
- Women with existing medical conditions or thyroid problems should consult healthcare professionals and take supplements as advised by them.

Consume a variety of iodine-rich foods

- Consume food with more iodine as part of a healthy balanced diet. Seaweed, kelp, seafood, marine fish, eggs, milk and dairy products are food with more iodine.
- In the event that iodine supplements cannot be taken, pregnant and lactating women may increase iodine intake from diet in order to meet the daily requirement of 250 µg of iodine per day.

Use iodised salt

- Use iodised salt instead of ordinary table salt.
- Pay attention to keep the overall salt intake to less than 5 g (less than 1 teaspoon) per day.
- As iodine content in iodised salt may be affected by humidity, heat and sunlight, iodised salt should be stored in a tight and coloured container and kept in a cool and dry place. It should be added to food just before serving.

For more information, please visit the Department of Health website:

Iodine Survey: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/iodine_survey_report_en.pdf

Do you have adequate iodine?: https://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/woman/30146.html

