

Iodine & Thyroid Hormones

By Dr. Anthony Capobianco

It appears that normalizing iodine levels in the body may be helpful for high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, thyroid disease, fibrocystic breasts and cardiac arrhythmias. Although iodine supplementation might itself correct thyroid related problems, thyroid hormone replacement is often necessary, as well. Thyroid hormone deficiency negatively affects the entire body and all its systems, also. Treatment of the thyroid without taking these substances requires an extraordinary commitment to osteopathic and homeopathic treatment, as practiced here. A more practical approach most opted for is to begin replacement in doses that will not suppress the body's ability to make thyroid hormones, while treatment continues, in hopes of correcting the underlying causes, if possible. By the time I see an average patient, the need for both iodine and thyroid taken indefinitely, is common and virtually always welcome, because of the noticeable positive results that follow.

A simple way to determine and track iodine deficiency begins with obtaining a bottle of tincture of iodine (Not mercurochrome) at your local pharmacy. Paint on a two inch square or silver dollar size circular patch, letting it dry for a minute or so, at which point, for future reference, you are to memorize the intensity of the amber color. It should be placed so you will remember to look at it, but not wash it off, such as your inner forearm. Look again, throughout the day, preferably every hour, before going to sleep and again upon waking, for a total of around 24 hours. (before washing it off). If the patch is gone before 24 hours, especially less than 8 hours, you are in need of iodine. Report the findings to me at your visit. If you are not allergic to iodine (shellfish, seaweed) obtain a small bottle or Iodoral .5 mg tablets which can be obtained from your local health food store, internet, by searching the word "Iodoral" or from Bellmar Pharmacy in Lakewood, Colorado at 800-525-9473 (\$25.00/bottle of 90). This is a compound of potassium iodide and iodine in a ratio ideal for immediate human utilization. Read the enclosed information before beginning to take the iodine. The liquid version of Iodoral is Lugol's solution, which has been around for many decades, and is an acceptable, more inexpensive and readily available substitute form. Both Iodoral and Armour are considered safe for use in pregnancy and during breast feeding for the nursing infant (the Japanese take in the equivalency of one Ioradol tablet per day, and enjoy a remarkable low rate of various cancers. Physicians here have not found any problems with its use, as well).

If we could be sure kelp was pure without contamination, it might be a suitable course for iodine. The longer it is out of the ocean the more it is altered into an unusable form and in addition, a large amount of capsules are necessary to obtain the equivalent amount of iodine found in the form of one or even a half of an Iorodal tablet.

If you are prescribed thyroid replacement (Armour, compounded T4, T3, etc.) take this the very first thing, immediately upon waking in the morning with water. Wait an hour before eating. At this point, the iodine can be taken as described below.

Begin taking a half a tablet of Iodoral as day, preferably with food (the tablets are scored allowing them to be snapped in two). It is normal to feel warmer in cold environments while taking Ioradal tablets. Continue to patch test your skin with the tincture of Iodine every month or so until the skin patch stays intact for 24 hours. At this point continue taking iodine at the rate to maintain the patch from fading before 24 hours. Repeat the skin test and the above procedure if needed, every three months or so to ensure adequate iodine. At this time remember to come in for follow up thyroid blood tests to help assess thyroid function as well. I can draw blood (non-fasting) or re-order thyroid hormone blood tests in one month if you are taking thyroid hormones and in 3 months if you are not, to see how you are doing with the iodine supplementation. If possible, hold your morning dose of Armour until after the blood drawing, in the morning.

Please note, however, that there is no blood test to directly measure the amount of hormone, Thyronine (T3) that actually attaches to cell receptors and gets to influence them. Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) reflects the inactive form of thyroid hormone (thyroxine T4) which must be converted to the active T3, to be effective. Note that a normal TSH in healthy individuals has been found to be around 1.5, NOT the higher range that is commonly considered normal on a typical laboratory report. Although blood tests (ex.'s: TSH, free T3, T4 and antibodies) are helpful to confirm a diagnosis of thyroid dysfunction, the best test for metabolism is to determine first morning temperatures before taking iodine or thyroid tablets. Obtain an oral digital (not an ear or forehead) thermometer, or the old glass bulb style, now available in environmentally suitable non-mercury form (Geratherm), at local pharmacies. Shake it down the night before, taping the thermometer to your alarm clock face, or thereabouts, and upon first waking, place it under your tongue for 8 minutes (the "snooze" having been set for 8 minutes). The oral digital thermometer reads in around a minute or less, and is easier to use, especially for children. Record the first morning temperatures for 5 consecutive days. These numbers should average out to at least 97.8 F for minimal thyroid functioning, optimally being between 97.8 – 98.2 F. If you are menstruating, include and note the second day of your period among these days. You should repeat temperature readings every month, graduating to occasional morning readings, now and then. Ultimately, the amount of iodine and/or thyroid prescribed is adjusted to obtain morning temperatures that fall within this range.

Please understand that the adrenal function is intimately related to the thyroid hormonal system, therefore support of the adrenal glands is essential. Blood tests such as fasting cortical levels and anti adrenal antibody levels can confirm a diagnosis, but regardless, supplements to support the gland are usually needed. Include Celtic sea salt instead of refined slat (unless you are salt restricted due to

kidney/renal disease), Ester vitamin C and pantothenic acid, 500 mg per day, unless in doses otherwise recommended, according to your individual case.

If you are on iodine or thyroid hormones (Armour thyroid) and experience palpitations, anxiety, insomnia, increased sweating and intolerance of heat, you may be able to have dosages reduced or discontinued. Although rare, any new symptoms should be reported to me at once. It may be beneficial to switch to a version available through a compounding pharmacy. Also, if you are taking Synthroid (synthetic T4) Thyrolar (synthetic T3,T4) or any other hormone replacement other than Armour thyroid, please notify me of this, as well.

I encourage you to explore further, regarding the prevalent problems and implications of iodine and thyroid deficiency. Excellent easy to read books are *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why you Can't Live Without It, and Overcoming Thyroid Disorders* by David Brownstein, MD. Call 1.888.647.5616 or order online at www.drbrownstein.com. The insert included in the Iodoral bottle is informative as well.