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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "IODINE INQUIRY" -- Information from the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Hungry for iodine?

Well...you may be...even though you aren't aware of it.

Your body needs small amounts of iodine. It helps to keep the thyroid gland healthy. When there isn't enough iodine to keep the thyroid gland in proper working order many changes take place in the body. In a child this may be stunted growth--both mentally and physically. In grown-ups it may mean less ability to think efficiently. Skin and hair may be dry. The face swollen. There may be less resistance to disease. Or the thyroid gland may become enlarged--the condition known as simple goiter.

In some areas of the world...the earth's surfaces furnishes enough iodine in the food and water to meet human needs. But in other areas---and particularly those that are far from the sea--the surface of the earth provides very little iodine.

Here in the United States...we have a large "goiter belt". The iodine in the soil and water of this area is low. This is especially true of the States around the Great Lakes and the Northwestern States.

Families in the "goiter belt" need to make special plans to be sure they get the small but steady supply of iodine the body needs.

Some of this iodine they can get from seafood. Supplies of salt water fish are plentiful this year. (Remember that the salt water fish is the

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source of iodine--not fresh water fish, though these may be rich in other food values.)

With modern methods of canning...freezing and refrigerated transportation...you don't have to live on the sea coast to benefit from this year's abundant supply of seafood. If you eat seafood about once a week it can help supply needed iodine.

But if you live in an area where there isn't much iodine in the soil and water--use iodized salt...unless your doctor advises against it. For most families in the low-iodine regions...iodized table salt is the best way yet found to make sure of getting regularly...the iodine you need to prevent simple goiter. This is especially true of families who may find it hard to get seafood...and who are likely to eat locally grown products.

Most natural salt contains iodine...but it may be lost during refining. In iodized salt...about the same proportion is restored as the refining process removed. When you use it regularly...iodized salt will supply plenty of iodine to meet your needs.

About half of the salt now sold is iodized. So it pays to read the label before you buy.

But one word of warning! Iodized salt helps to prevent simple goiter. But it may be harmful to one that has advanced too far. The Council of Foods of the American Medical Association warns that "persons over 30 years of age with any swelling of the throat...should not use iodized salt unless they do so under the direction of a competent physician."

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