



For Immediate Release

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When Salt IS Good for You: The Thyroid Health Connection

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (June 25, 2014) – In recent years, medical journals and consumer publications alike have been hashing out the controversy about salt consumption and its effects on an array of medical conditions, primarily high blood pressure and heart disease, but also osteoporosis, kidney stones and kidney disease, and obesity.

There is one fundamental fact that has gotten lost in the great salt debate: the substance is one of the primary vehicles for delivering iodine to the body's thyroid gland, which is essential to production of thyroid hormone. Thyroid hormone is used in every cell of our bodies to regulate metabolism and weight by controlling the burning of fat for energy and heat and managing the regulation of other vital body functions. Without iodine, thyroid hormone production simply does not happen, thus throwing the body into a tailspin.

Although iodine is present naturally in seawater and soil, a stable source of the element does not exist in many parts of the world, and the body does not make iodine. Consequently, management of iodine deficiency disorders is a fundamental part of most national nutrition strategies.

In the U.S., salt producers have been working with public health authorities since the 1920s to add iodine to table salt; it was used then to correct what was a national epidemic of goiter, an abnormal enlargement of the thyroid gland that occurs when the thyroid enlarges in response to an insufficient supply of thyroid hormone. Salt was used because it is an easy, spoil-free method of getting iodine into the food chain.

Pregnant women are at particular risk of iodine deficiency, because of increased thyroid hormone production during pregnancy, which a fetus needs inside the womb to reach optimal development. Iodine deficiency during pregnancy can result in damage to the developing brain and can lead to profound mental retardation and problems with growth, hearing and speech.

Women who are breastfeeding also need higher iodine intake, since iodine is transported into breast milk, where it is important for infant nutrition.

The American Association of Endocrinologists (AACE) and the American College of Endocrinology (ACE) recommend that all U.S. women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy should take a daily multivitamin containing 150 micrograms of iodine to avoid iodine deficiency.

Iodine deficiency also can lead to hypothyroidism (low thyroid hormone levels). In hypothyroidism, because the body's cells aren't receiving enough thyroid hormone, the bodily processes start slowing down, causing intolerance to cold, fatigue, dry skin, constipation, depression, forgetfulness and more. Hypothyroidism disproportionately affects women more than men, because the female hormone estrogen inhibits the absorption of iodine.

If you're scrambling to grab the salt shaker or considering taking iodine supplements, a note of caution: ingesting too much iodine can cause iodine poisoning and lead to symptoms ranging from nausea and vomiting to more severe effects such as seizures, delirium and shock.

To review the National Institutes of Health's U.S. daily recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for iodine and information on selected food sources of iodine beyond salt, visit:

<http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iodine-HealthProfessional/>.

To learn more about the importance of iodine in thyroid function as well as thyroid disorders, visit

www.thyroidwareness.com.

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The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) represents more than 6,500 endocrinologists in the United States and abroad. AACE is the largest association of clinical endocrinologists in the world. The majority of AACE members are certified in endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism and concentrate on the treatment of patients with endocrine and metabolic disorders including diabetes, thyroid disorders, osteoporosis, growth hormone deficiency, cholesterol disorders, hypertension and obesity. For more information, visit the AACE website at www.aace.com, become a fan on Facebook at www.facebook.com/theaace or follow AACE on Twitter at www.twitter.com/theaace.

About the American College of Endocrinology (ACE)

The American College of Endocrinology (ACE) is the educational, charitable and scientific arm of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE). ACE is the leader in advancing the care and prevention of endocrine and metabolic disorders by: providing professional education and reliable public health information; recognizing excellence in education, research and service; promoting clinical research and defining the future of Clinical Endocrinology. For more information about the College, visit www.aace.com/college. For more information about the endocrine system, visit the ACE-sponsored patient education website at www.empoweryourhealth.org.