2026 CDC NUTRITION REPORT

U.S. women of reproductive age have borderline mild iodine deficiency

Background

Iodine is an essential part of thyroid hormones. Thyroid hormones control a person's growth and development. Across the world, iodized salt and seafood are generally the main source of this nutrient in the diet. In the United States, most people get their iodine from grains and dairy products like milk.

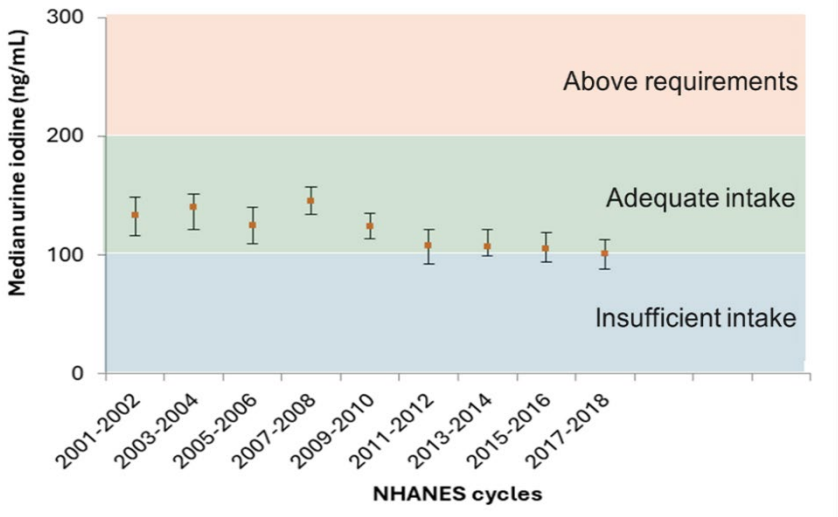
Iodine deficiency is the most preventable cause of intellectual disability in the world. Iodine deficiency can also cause hypothyroidism, goiter, cretinism, and other health problems.

Most dietary iodine absorbed by the body eventually shows up in the urine. So, the most common way to find out a person's iodine status is to measure the amount of iodine in his or her urine.

Intake recommendations

The American Thyroid Association recommends that all prenatal vitamins contain 150 micrograms of iodine and that North American women take daily dietary supplements with 150 micrograms of iodine during pregnancy and while nursing.

Urine iodine trends in American women



Other key findings

Of all age groups, children 6-11 years old had the highest urine iodine levels, indicating the highest iodine intake.

Females had lower urine iodine levels than males.

Source: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2001-2002 to 2017–2018.

Women of reproductive age (females 12–49 years old) showed lower levels of iodine in their urine from 2001–2002 to 2017–2018. Women showed borderline mild iodine deficiency (i.e., insufficient intake) in recent NHANES cycles.

CDC U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

The 2026 Nutrition Report provides:

- Nutritional biomarker information for dietary supplement users and non-users
- Reference information for physicians and scientists to detect high or low nutrient levels in people
- A look at nutrient levels over time to see trends in nutrition status
- Numbers that can be used to compare the effectiveness of nutrition interventions