

# [Micronutrient deficiency](https://assignbuster.com/micronutrient-deficiency/)

Iodine Deficiency of the Health Sciences and Medicine of the Concerned July 14, Iodine Deficiency Introduction Iodine is an important micronutrient required by the human body to synthesize vital thyroid hormones (Mercer, 2006). Iodine deficiency stands to be one of the leading causes of brain damage the world over (WHO: Online). Yet, this is also true that the diseases caused by iodine deficiency can easily be prevented. It goes without saying that today the world is on the brink of eliminating iodine deficiency related maladies (WHO: Online). Still, much needs to be done, before a complete and conclusive success is achieved in this aspect of health care. Disorders Caused by Iodine Deficiency Iodine deficiency can impact human health much before the birth of a child. Iodine deficiency has the potential to jeopardize children’s mental health and in some instances could put to risk the very survival of a child (WHO: Online). Iodine deficiency leads to the impairment of the cognitive development in children (WHO: Online). Iodine deficiency has severe repercussions during pregnancy. It could lead to still births, abortions and may lead to congenital abnormalities like mental retardation that is grave and mostly irreversible, and cretinism (WHO: Online). Iodine deficiency also gives way to goiter (WHO: Online). These are some of the visible and easily discernable disorders caused by iodine deficiency. Of far greater significance is the less visible impact of iodine deficiency that most often gives way to mental impairment resulting in a compromise of the intellectual capacities in children and adults, in the day to day life (WHO: Online). Symptoms of Iodine Deficiency Some common symptoms of iodine deficiency include goiter or enlargement of the thyroid, weight gain, weakness, fatigue and depression (Mercer, 2006). Iodine deficiency could also give way to symptoms like appetite fluctuations, weight loss and rapid heartbeat (Mercer, 2006). Prevalence of Iodine Deficiency During the earlier half of the 20th century, iodine deficiency was quiet prevalent in the United States (Mitchell, 1996, p. 7). However, this problem was overcome by encouraging the usage of iodized salt. People residing in those regions of the world were the natural diet is deficient in iodine and where iodine intake is not supplemented by the usage of iodized salt are more prone to iodine deficiency disorders (Mitchell, 1996, p. 7). Such regions include Africa, Western Pacific and South-East Asia (Mitchell, 1996, p. 7). As per WHO estimates, nearly 54 nations around the world are positively iodine deficient (Online). In addition certain risk factors like radiation exposure, pregnancy, alcohol and tobacco consumption and usage of oral contraceptives could heighten the risk of iodine deficiency (Mercer, 2006). Iodized Salt Programs Since 1980s, an international network of UN, WHO, UNICEF, International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD), varied localized NGOs and corporate and research organizations, called Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency is dedicated to helping the impacted countries world over and their salt industries to initiate national salt iodization programs aimed at curbing iodine deficiency and the related disorders (WHO: Online). Conclusion Iodine deficiency is a health risk that can easily be controlled through iodized salt. The cost of iodizing salt is very low and it is a food item that is readily available and widely consumed throughout the world. References Mercer, Preston L. (2006) International Iodine Deficiency. Forum of Public Policy: A Journal of Oxford Round Table, Forum of Public Policy. Mitchell, Jennifer. (Sept.-Oct. 1996). Iodine Deficiency Affects over a Quarter of World Population. World Watch, 9(5), 7-8. Nutrition-Iodine Deficiency. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved July 14, 2001, from http://www. who. int/nutrition/topics/idd/en/