Dr. David Brownstein's

NATURAL WAY TO HEALTH

Achieving & Maintaining Your Optimal Health

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Iodine Deficiency: The Growing Epidemic

I've been studying natural therapies for more than 20 years. I am fascinated by human biochemistry and how eating a good diet and using natural supplements can help the body reach optimal health.

Today, as opposed to 20 years ago, there is a whole cornucopia of supplements available for people who are conscientious about their health.

Yet out of all of the natural therapies I have prescribed, one nutrient stands head and shoulders above the rest: iodine.

For more than 12 years, I have been studying the effects of iodine on human health. During this time, I have tested thousands of patients and found that a vast majority are deficient of this essential nutrient.

In fact, the rate of iodine deficiency in the United States has actually increased during this time.

In this issue of Natural Way to Health, I will tell you why iodine is so important for good health, along with the consequences of iodine deficiency, and what you can do to maintain optimal levels of this vital nutrient.

Iodine Deficiency Causes Many Illnesses

In my opinion, iodine is the most misunderstood nutrient on Earth. When I was in medical school, we were told that no one needs to supplement with iodine, because we get enough from iodized salt along with the foods we eat in a regular diet.

In fact, we were taught that iodine supplementation could lead to bad outcomes, including precipitating or aggravating a thyroid disorder.

Furthermore, I was taught that iodine supplementation could cause autoimmune thyroid disorders.

After educating myself, and testing and treating thousands of patients, I am convinced that my medical training on iodine was incorrect.

Unfortunately, most healthcare professionals still don't understand how to test for or utilize iodine in their practice.

We are experiencing epidemics of autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), hypothyroidism, autoimmune thyroid disorders such as Hashimoto's and Graves' diseases, thyroid cancer, breast cancer and fibrocystic breast disease, and prostate cancer, as well as diseases of the ovaries and uterus.

In This Issue . . .

The Link Between Iodine and IQ

Intelligence quotient (IQ) is a measure of intellect derived from standardized testing with a median, or normal, score of 100. Studies have shown that iodine deficiency is correlated with a reduced IQ.

Researchers studied three groups of pregnant women and measured the IQs of their children. All three groups were supplemented with 200 mcg of iodine — which is an amount that is slightly lower than the recommended daily intake for iodine. The first group was supplemented at 4 to 6 weeks of gestation; group two was supplemented at 12 to 14 weeks of gestation; and group three was not supplemented until after delivery.

The results were astounding. The IQ of the infants in group one was normal — averaging about 101. The IQ of group two was 92. Just a short delay — 8 weeks gestation — in iodine supplementation was associated with a significant decline in the children's IQ. Group three, supplemented only after pregnancy, had the lowest average score: 87.

This study showed that the longer that iodine was delayed during pregnancy, the lower the IQ in the newborn.

This is not the only study to show a correlation with lower IQ levels related to iodine deficiency. A meta-analysis of 18 studies of children and adolescents found that iodine deficiency was associated with a 13.5-point lower IQ score in children and adolescents. In fact, the same results have been found across the world in multiple cultures.

Iodine deficiency is the link between all of these illnesses.

Doctors Don't Recognize Problem

Iodine is an essential element, which means that we cannot live without it. Every cell in the human body requires adequate iodine to perform its function.

For instance, white blood cells need to be supplied with sufficient amounts of iodine in order to fight infection. Iodine is also important for proper function of the thyroid gland, which is located in the lower part of the neck and produces thyroid hormone.

We cannot live without adequate production of thyroid hormone, and the thyroid gland cannot produce thyroid hormone without sufficient iodine stores.

All thyroid hormones contain iodine. For example, the most common thyroid hormone, thyroxine (also called T4) contains four iodine atoms per molecule.

Over the last 40 years, iodine levels have fallen precipitously in the United States. How precipitously? In fact, iodine levels have fallen more than 50 percent since the 1970s.[1]

For the "naysayers," I have one question: If excess iodine were causing all the thyroid issues that I previously mentioned, why haven't these illnesses been declining during the last 40 years?

Remember, as iodine levels have decreased by over *half*, we have seen epidemic increases of thyroid problems including autoimmune thyroid disorders and hypothyroidism, as well as epidemic increases in cancer and diseases of the breast, ovary, uterus, and prostate.

All of these conditions can be caused by iodine deficiency — and each of them can be treated with iodine supplementation.

The two main reasons that doctors do not

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recognize iodine deficiency are:

1. Doctors do not believe iodine deficiency exists.
2. Doctors do not know how to order or interpret iodine tests.

How to Test Your Levels

In medical school and during my residency training, there was absolutely no training for how to test a patient's iodine level. Why? Because we were told that no one was suffering from iodine deficiency.

But if you never test for iodine deficiency, how could you possibly know if anyone is iodine deficient? It was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It was only when I began studying holistic medicine that I began searching for a good test to measure iodine levels.

The best way to determine a person's iodine status is to measure his or her urinary iodide levels. There are two tests available for this reading: a spot urinary iodine level; and a 24-hour iodine loading test.

The spot urinary test is done with a single urine specimen which is measured for urinary iodide. However, this test can sometimes give inaccurate information if iodine was just ingested in either food or supplement form.

The 24-hour iodine loading test was designed by my mentor Dr. Guy Abraham. With this test, iodine supplements must be avoided for three days before taking a measurement.

On the day of the test, 50 mg of iodine is taken at "time zero." Then all urine is collected for 24 hours.

A sample from the 24-hour urine collection is measured to assess the amount of iodine that is excreted.

A normal 24-hour iodine loading test occurs when greater than 95 percent of the ingested amount — that is, at least 45 mg — is excreted.

I have performed thousands of iodine tests — both urinary spot tests and 24-hour loading tests. The vast majority of patients I have tested — more than 96 percent — showed an iodine deficiency. Worse yet, most of those patients were *severely* deficient.

I have lectured to thousands of healthcare professionals about these findings. When I ask those who are testing their patients for iodine if they are getting similar results, the answer is always yes.

ADHD Caused By Iodine Deficiency

Iodine is especially important for women of childbearing age because adequate iodine levels are required for proper neurological formation during gestation.

It has been known for more than 100 years that low iodine levels in pregnant women can result in neurological problems in their offspring. "Cretinism" is a condition of stunted physical growth and severe neurological problems that can be caused by iodine deficiency in the womb.

A recent study was designed to determine whether children born to mothers with iodine deficiency during pregnancy have poorer educational outcomes compared to peers at age 9.[2] Compared to the control group, the children of mothers who had iodine deficiency (defined as a urinary iodine level of less than 150 mcg/L) had:

- 10 percent decline in spelling ability
- 8 percent decline in grammar
- 6 percent decline in English literacy

I have no doubt that the epidemic of ADHD we're seeing in our youth is due, at least in part, to iodine deficiency. Likewise, a pattern of iodine

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David Brownstein, M.D., is a board-certified family physician and one of the foremost practitioners of holistic medicine. Dr. Brownstein has lectured internationally to physicians and others about his success with nutritional therapies in his practice. His books include *Drugs That Don't Work and Natural Therapies That Do!; Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It; Salt Your Way To Health; The Miracle of Natural Hormones; Overcoming Arthritis; Overcoming Thyroid Disorders; The Guide to a Gluten-Free Diet; B12 For Health; The Guide to a Dairy-Free Diet;* and *The Soy Deception*. He is the medical director of the Center for Holistic Medicine in West Bloomfield, Mich., where he lives with his wife, Allison, and their teenage daughters, Hailey and Jessica. For more information about Dr. Brownstein, please go to www.drbrownstein.com.

Brain Fog Threatens Doctor's Career

In each issue, I will share with you the story of one of my patients and how sometimes simple alternative approaches can solve major health problems. Names and some details have been changed for privacy's sake, but the problems and their resolutions are real.

— Dr. David Brownstein

Shelly was a 54-year-old internal medicine doctor who had recently begun to feel that she was losing her skills. "Something has happened to my brain," she told me during her first visit. "I have trouble remembering patients' names; sometimes I can't remember drug names or doses. What can I do? If this gets worse, I'll have to retire."

These memory issues started when Shelly began to experience menopause. She was treated with conventional hormone replacement therapy, which had helped her deal with hot flashes but had not helped with other issues. After a few years, she stopped taking the synthetic hormones.

Shelly was also suffering from chronic fatigue and reported that she was rapidly losing muscle tone. I told her that we would need to do a complete nutritional evaluation to determine her hormonal status.

Balanced Hormones Let You Age Gracefully

Glands are groups of cells or organs that produce secretions, called hormones, that are used to stimulate body processes. All of the glands in the body together make up the endocrine system. Hormones travel through the bloodstream to their target tissues where they bind with their complementary receptors.

The binding of a hormone to its receptor results in the production of proteins and other substances. For instance, the binding of testosterone to its receptors results in proteins being formed that lead to building muscle and bone strength.

In my experience, most patients who have chronic illness or fatigue issues are suffering from hormonal imbalances. Balancing the endocrine system provides some of the most satisfying results in medicine.

Nearly all hormone levels peak at a young age — around 20 years old — and most decline after that. But just because a hormone declines does not mean there is a problem. Aging is not a disease, and should not be treated as such.

People can age gracefully or painfully. But it is impossible to age gracefully without maintaining an optimal endocrine system.

To me, aging gracefully simply means feeling good in your middle and older years. That includes having enough energy to do whatever it is you want to do.

Likewise, having optimal brain function is a prerequisite of aging gracefully.

'Back to Life'

When Shelly returned to review her lab tests, I told her that her adrenal hormones were severely imbalanced. The adrenal glands are located on the upper pole of the kidneys. They are responsible for producing a plethora of hormones that control many crucial physiological reactions in the body.

The adrenal glands are well known for their production of the fight or flight hormones that allow us to respond to emergencies. Among the other substances they produce is a steroid hormone called pregnenolone.

Pregnenolone is sometimes referred to as the "mother hormone" because it is produced upstream of all the other adrenal hormones. It is formed from the fat-like substance cholesterol.

Unfortunately, many patients have inadequate pregnenolone production because they take statin medications, which block the production of cholesterol. They also result in lower production of all the adrenal hormones, including pregnenolone.

Shelly, who had never had a cardiovascular event, was taking a statin for elevated cholesterol.

But's Shelly's pregnenolone level was below the detectable limits. I told her that there were no studies showing that statin medications can improve longevity for women who don't have a history of a heart attack.

Shelly decided to stop the statin medication. I also placed her on 25 mg of pregnenolone per day, along with some other supplements based on her testing.

When Shelly came back to see me two months later her life had changed. "My brain feels like it has come back to life," she said. "The pregnenolone has really helped. I ran out of it for a week and I definitely did not feel as sharp."

Pregnenolone is particularly helpful for brain dysfunction. That makes sense, because the highest concentration of the hormone is in the brain. I have found pregnenolone supplementation extremely helpful for patients suffering from brain complaints.

For most patients, a dose of 25 to 50 mg is enough to alleviate symptoms. □

Special Advertiser Supplement

CONSUMER NEWS ALERT

What Do Cigarettes and CoQ10 Have in Common?

You've probably heard about the many ways that taking a CoEnzyme Q10 supplement can benefit your health, from increased energy and brainpower to reduced joint and muscle pain and improved heart function. But what you may not realize that most CoQ10 supplements — even some expensive ones — are made with a form of CoQ10 that is so poorly absorbed, it might as well be an empty pill. This is why many people take CoQ10 for years without ever experiencing noticeable benefits. What a shame.

I'm Joshua Corn, Editor-in-Chief of the *Live in the Now* natural health newsletter. I'm also CEO of *Stop Aging Now*, a company that has been making premium grade dietary supplements for nearly 20 years. My passion for natural health has always driven me to educate people on safe and effective alternative solutions.

Once you start taking the right kind of CoQ10, you'll experience massive boosts in your mood, energy and brainpower, relief from everyday aches and better heart health. Here's what you need to know.

CoQ10 Is Fuel for Your Heart

Your heart relies on CoQ10 to get its job done. This is why so many studies have shown that CoQ10 confers powerful protection for your entire cardiovascular system. When CoQ10 levels get low, your heart strains to do its job and your entire body suffers.[1,2]

By Age 50, Your CoQ10 Levels May Be Critically Low

According to leading experts it's critical to supplement with CoQ10 as you age.[3] CoQ10 levels begin to drop after age 30, and by age 50, your levels may be too low to support optimal heart function.[4] By age 70, your levels can become so low they can actually accelerate aging.[5] Age aside, further loss of CoQ10 may be caused by stress, illness and the use of statins or other drugs.[6]

The Supplement Industry's DIRTY Little Secret

There's a dirty little secret about CoQ10 that they won't tell you on the label. The research supporting the benefits of CoQ10 was conducted with natural "trans-form" CoQ10. But most supplements are made with *synthetic* "cis-form CoQ10," which is made from tobacco leaves! And there's absolutely no good data out there proving this synthetic junk's effectiveness or safety. So make sure to avoid it!

CoQ10 Benefits: Too Good to Ignore

I've read hundreds of CoQ10 studies and can assure you that it's safe, won't upset your stomach and doesn't conflict with most medications or supplements.[7,8,9] What it does is nothing short of a health miracle:

- Energizes your heart and keeps it pumping strong[10]
- Boosts brain power and provides mental clarity[11]
- Provides cellular energy and effectively combats fatigue[12]
- Fights off harmful free radicals that accumulate in your body[13]

How To "Read Between the Lines"

Here are some foolproof tips to guide you in shopping for CoQ10. Look for the words "trans-form" on the label. This is identical to the natural CoQ10 produced by the body. Also make sure it is yeast-fermented, which yields the most effective form. Finally, make sure it says "Made in the USA" on the bottle.

Fuel Your Heart and Improve Your Health

I'd like you to consider a superior CoQ10 formula called MAX-Q10™ that I formulated for my company, *Stop Aging Now*. It has been one of our bestsellers year after year. I take MAX-Q10 every single day without fail. Here's why you should too:

- MAX-Q10 is made in the USA with trans-form CoQ10.
- MAX-Q10 offers up to 5x better absorption than other brands.
- MAX-Q10 is made using the yeast-fermentation method.
- Just 1 small softgel provides the ideal 200 mg daily dose.
- Guess what? MAX-Q10 costs as low as $14.99 per bottle.

I Personally Guarantee the Quality

I like to keep things simple. If you don't like MAX-Q10, even after 1 full year, it's FREE. This way, you risk nothing, so order it today!

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decline and an increase in autism has been seen in other Western countries such as New Zealand, England, Australia, and Italy.[3,4,5,6]

In a separate study, pregnant women from an iodine-deficient region were compared to women from an iodine-sufficient region.[7] The women from the iodine-deficient area had lower thyroid hormone levels than women from the iodine-sufficient area.

The authors hypothesized that "endemic iodine deficiency may be responsible for the impaired psychoneurological development observed in children from that area. Appropriate iodine . . . prophylaxis to women in that region may prevent the neurobehavioral, cognitive, and motor compromise of that population."

Another study, which had 10 years of follow-up, found that ADHD was diagnosed in 70 percent of children born to mothers living in an iodine-deficient area.

This was compared to *no* diagnoses of ADHD in women living in an iodine-sufficient area.

This study also found that IQ was lower in the children born to women in the iodine-deficient area. The researchers found an average IQ of 88 for those children, versus an IQ of 99 in children born to mothers in an iodine-sufficient area.[8]

Finding a Knowledgeable Healthcare Provider

Though I have presented a pretty bleak picture of the country's health, all is not lost. You can make changes in your diet and your supplement regimen that will lower your chances of becoming ill with a disease related to iodine deficiency.

The first step is to work with a healthcare provider who understands iodine and its importance for the body. There are nutritionists, chiropractors, medical doctors, osteopaths, nurses, and others that understand the importance of ensuring adequate iodine intake.

How do you find them? The best place to start is with a holistic healthcare practitioner. You'll have little chance of finding a conventional doctor who knows about iodine.

After finding the right healthcare provider, the next step is to have your iodine levels assessed. If you are not taking iodine, a spot urinary iodine test can provide useful information.

However, as previously mentioned, once you are supplementing with iodine, it is best to rely on the 24-hour iodine loading test, which can provide more useful information on your body's ability to absorb and utilize iodine.

Even better information can be obtained when the 24-hour loading test is repeated. You can then determine if the iodine program you are on is working.

In other words, you can assess whether you are becoming iodine-sufficient.

Unrefined Salt Is Essential

In order to optimize iodine levels, it is important to use other nutrients along with iodine. The most important of these nutrients is unrefined salt.

There is a big difference between refined and unrefined salt.

Refined salt is 99 percent sodium and chloride, along with toxic additives such as ferrocyanide, and aluminum.

Unrefined salt, on the other hand, contains as much as 2 percent trace minerals. It is the mineral content of unrefined salt that makes it more healthy than refined salt.

Using unrefined salt along with iodine therapy minimizes adverse effects. If a person has high levels of toxic halides such as bromine and fluoride in his or her body, iodine supplementation can displace those halides from their receptors and allow them to be excreted.

Indeed, this treatment has been used for many years. In the past, this remedy for bromine toxicity

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In the News: Reading Between the Medical Headlines

High Cholesterol Increases Survival After Stroke

In the August 2013 issue of the *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease*, researchers looked at patients' long-term survival after a stroke. They studied 190 stroke patients admitted to a hospital in Sweden and classified the patients as having high or low cholesterol, depending on their levels upon admission. "High cholesterol" was established as greater than 178 mg/dL, while less than that was "low cholesterol."

> 'Cholesterol is needed to maintain normal cell structure and hormones.'

Compared with those in the high cholesterol group, patients with low cholesterol were found to have an 8 percent lower survival rate at three months, 11 percent lower survival at one year, and 27 percent lower survival at five years. Overall, there was a 97 percent increase increased mortality risk in low-cholesterol subjects.

The authors concluded, "High admission cholesterol may be associated with increased long-term survival after stroke."

Frankly, this study is not shocking. Cholesterol is an important substance for the body. It is an antioxidant and is also the main constituent of the myelin sheath that protects the nerves of the brain. It is needed to maintain the normal cell structure and is a precursor to adrenal and sex hormones.

Conventional medicine would have you believe that the lower your cholesterol number is, the better. They are wrong.

I don't know how anyone could believe that poisoning the enzyme that makes cholesterol — as statin drugs do — could be beneficial to health.

Multivitamins Fight Breast Cancer

A recent study in the October 2013 issue of *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* examined whether multivitamin supplements used by women already diagnosed with invasive breast cancer would affect their mortality risk. This was a prospective cohort study of 7,728 women ages 50 to 79 in the Women's Health Initiative.

The women, who all had breast cancer, were classified into two groups: users of multivitamins and nonusers of multivitamins, and were followed for 7.1 years after their diagnosis. At the start of the study, 38 percent of the women used a multivitamin supplement. At the end of 7.1 years, breast cancer mortality was 30 percent lower in multivitamin users as compared to nonusers.

I was taught in medical school that no one needed to take vitamins — that we could all get enough nutrients from our food. After 20 years of treating patients, I can unequivocally state that my medical school professors were dead wrong.

I find nutritional deficiencies — including a lack of basic vitamins and minerals — in the vast majority of my patients. If we lack these essential nutritional ingredients, our immune system does not work well.

A good multivitamin/mineral supplement can provide minimal amounts of essential elements in order to prevent a deficiency, and even protect you against cancer.

B Vitamins Prevent Blindness

Scientists recently studied whether there was a relationship between vitamin B12 and folic acid and macular degeneration. The Blue Mountains Eye Study of common diseases followed 1,390 subjects for up to 15 years, measuring homocysteine, folate, and vitamin B12 levels, and published their findings in the May 1, 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Homocysteine is a protein produced in the body; it requires adequate levels of B12 and folic acid to be metabolized. Elevated homocysteine may indicate vitamin B12 and/or folic acid deficiency.

Compared to those with low homocysteine levels, the subjects whose levels were elevated (greater than 15 umols/L) had a 56 percent greater risk macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S.

Everyone should have their homocysteine levels checked yearly because elevated homocysteine levels (greater than 10 umols/L) is cause for concern. If an elevated level of homocysteine is detected, further research into B-vitamin levels (particularly vitamins B12 and B6 along with folic acid levels) should be initiated.

If they are low, supplementing with B-vitamins can lower homocysteine levels in the vast majority of patients. Keeping your homocysteine low may not only benefit your eyes — it can also lower your risk of blood clotting disorders such as heart disease and stroke. □

Study: Most Women Are Iodine Deficient

For more than 40 years, the U.S. Government has been testing a cross section of Americans for their nutritional statuses and toxicities. These results are gathered in a report called the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). The latest iodine results have just been released — and the news is not good.

Because iodine is so important for a baby's thyroid and neurological system to form, it is crucial for a woman of childbearing age to have adequate levels.

Yet the latest NHANES study, which covers the years 2007 to 2010, found that iodine deficiency is occurring in the majority of women of childbearing age (18-44 years), according to a report in the journal *Thyroid*.

In total, 56 percent of women were iodine deficient — including 37 percent moderately deficient, and 15 percent severely deficient.

These numbers are slightly worse than the previous NHANES study from 2005 to 2008, and much worse than NHANES data from 1970.

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was referred to as "salting it out."

In this process, intravenous sodium chloride or orally administered salt products were used to help the body to excrete excess amounts of both bromine and fluoride.

I have treated hundreds of patients who experienced side effects with iodine supplements by having them stop the iodine for two weeks while taking increased amounts of unrefined salt.

How much salt should you ingest? If you have normal kidney function and ingest adequate amounts of water, I suggest starting with at least one teaspoon of unrefined salt per day.

It is best to spread salt intake throughout the day, rather than taking it all at once.

Some patients will need more than one teaspoon of unrefined salt per day.

Nutrients That Correct Low Iodine

In addition to unrefined salt, vitamin C is very helpful for ameliorating side effects from iodine supplementation.

Similar to iodine, vitamin C is a strong antioxidant that helps to keep detoxification pathways open, aiding the body's removal of halides such as bromine and fluoride.

I suggest taking 3,000 to 5,000 mg of vitamin C per day. If you have an adverse reaction from iodine, it is okay to increase the vitamin C dose as long as you are not experiencing diarrhea.

Vitamins B2 (riboflavin) and B3 (niacin) are also helpful along with iodine supplementation. These help with the cell use of iodine to make thyroid hormone.

Finally, magnesium is also helpful when supplementing with iodine because it calms the body.

If iodine causes symptoms such as nervousness or jitteriness, it is best to stop taking the iodine for two weeks and supplement with magnesium in a dose of 200 to 400 mg per day, along with unrefined salt and vitamins C, B2, and B3.

After two weeks of this regimen, you can restart iodine again.

As I noted, in the last 40 years iodine levels have fallen more than 50 percent across the U.S. Yet this public health disaster is not being recognized or treated, and we are facing a myriad of consequences including severe increases in hypothyroidism, autoimmune thyroid disorders, ADHD, and cancers of the breast, ovary, uterus, prostate, and thyroid.

Stimulant drugs, chemotherapy agents, surgery, and radiation will not reverse the incidence of these conditions. Instead of spending enormous sums of money treating these illnesses after they develop, we should be searching for underlying causes of these illnesses. I have no doubt that iodine deficiency is a major piece of this puzzle.

For more information about iodine, see my newest book, *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It*, 5th edition. □

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Ask Dr. B

Dear Readers,

I will try to answer as many questions as I can. However, because of the volume of questions, I cannot answer each letter personally. Please include your full name, city, and state when submitting. If you have a question for me, please email it to: askdrdavid@newsmax.com.

Signs of Thyroid Problem

I take my temperature every morning and it is always low. My other symptoms are hair breaking, poor eyebrow growth, exhaustion, and pale, pasty skin. Could these be caused by a thyroid problem?

— Terry J., Beaumont, Texas

All of the symptoms you list could be related to a low thyroid condition (hypothyroidism).

The thyroid gland sits in the lower pole of the neck. Its job is to produce thyroid hormone, which is responsible for maintaining the metabolic rate of the body. Optimal functioning of the thyroid gland is necessary for producing ATP, the energy molecule of the body.

Common complaints when the thyroid is under-functioning include fatigue, hair loss (including eyebrow thinning), weight gain, and a sense of being cold. One of the classic signs of hypothyroidism is a low basal body temperature, which is the resting temperature of the body.

Recently, I lectured to a large group of holistic healthcare practitioners and asked them to estimate what percentage of their patients are suffering from thyroid disorders. Their estimates agreed with mine: More than 30 percent of our population is currently suffering from a thyroid disorder, with hypothyroidism — also called thyroid deficiency — being the most common diagnosis.

Why is this happening? I feel that our declining iodine levels are chiefly responsible for this epidemic rate of thyroid disease.

I suggest seeing a holistic healthcare provider who knows about iodine. He or she can test your iodine and thyroid levels. After a diagnosis is made, you can take the appropriate steps to get your health back.

More information about a holistic approach to diagnosing and treating thyroid disorders can be found in my book, *Overcoming Thyroid Disorders*.

Drink Water for Better Memory

I'm concerned about memory loss. What can a person do naturally to help with this?

— Shirley T., Alexandria, Va.

Memory difficulties are one of the most common complaints I hear in my practice. The first step is to diagnose what is wrong with your brain function. There can be numerous reasons why you are having memory difficulties. But the most common reason I see for brain dysfunction is dehydration.

The brain is made up of approximately 80 percent water. In a chronically dehydrated state, brain function declines. Headaches are also common. It is impossible to have optimal brain function without ensuring adequate hydration.

How much water is enough? Take your weight in pounds, divide by two and the resulting number is the amount of filtered water you should drink daily, in ounces. Coffee, soda, juice, and other beverages are no substitute for drinking water.

When drinking water, I also suggest ingesting unrefined salt. The salt helps your body utilize water more efficiently.

There is also no question that eating a healthy diet helps improve brain function. A healthy diet supplies vital nutrients necessary for optimal brain function.

Brain decline is very common with heavy metal toxicity. The most common heavy metal poisoning that I diagnose is mercury. There are numerous sources for mercury toxicity, including dental fillings, vaccines (such as the flu vaccine), and ingesting fish.

Have your heavy metal levels tested by a holistic healthcare provider. If they are high, detoxification protocols can be implemented to help.

Finally, ensure that you have adequate vitamin B12 levels. I see many patients suffering from brain dysfunction due to B12 deficiency.

To your good health,

David Brownstein, M.D.