

# Salt Iodisation

A Practical Guide for  
Salt Importers,  
Wholesalers and  
Retailers



# Introduction

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Iodine is an essential micronutrient required for thyroid hormone synthesis to support growth and development. Persistently low iodine intake will result in iodine deficiency or even damage to the developing brain and other harmful effects known collectively as iodine deficiency disorders (IDDs).

While the best way of preventing micronutrient malnutrition is to ensure consumption of a balanced diet that is adequate in every nutrient, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that an appropriate food fortification programme can also be part of a comprehensive food-based strategy for combating micronutrient deficiencies.



Iodised salt has been recognised as the most convenient and most effective vehicle for the administration of supplemental iodine. The WHO promotes the Universal Salt Iodisation (USI) to prevent and control IDD. WHO also states that the addition of iodate or iodide to salt does not affect the taste or smell of the salt or foods containing iodised salt, and therefore consumer acceptability is high.

Currently, iodised salt (i.e. salt iodised or “fortified” with iodine) is not yet widely available in Hong Kong. This practical guide has made reference to WHO’s and Codex’s guidelines and/or standards relevant to iodised salt. The guide intends to encourage food traders to make iodised salt more accessible to the local population.





# Practical Guides on Providing Iodised Salt

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## Procuring/Sourcing of Iodised Salt

- Iodised salt is available in many places, e.g. Mainland China, the United States, and New Zealand. Most specialty salts, such as sea salt, kosher salt, Himalayan salt, and fleur de sel, are not usually iodised. Since many places have both iodised and non-iodised salt supply, do confirm with your supplier(s) that the iodised salt you purchased are iodised.
- Procure iodised salt from supplier(s) who could provide the type of fortificant(s) and the level of iodine added to the salt.

## When iodising salt, follow WHO's recommendations

- In typical circumstances, iodine concentration in salt at the point of production should be within the range of 20–40 mg of iodine per kg of salt (i.e. 20–40 ppm of iodine), and 15–40 ppm at household (consumer) level, in order to provide 150 µg of iodine per person per day.

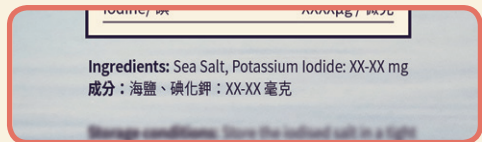
- Both potassium iodate ( $\text{KIO}_3$ ) and potassium iodide ( $\text{KI}$ ) can be used as iodine fortificants. Other fortificants have been used in some countries, for example, seaweed iodine, calcium iodide ( $\text{CaI}_2$ ), and calcium iodate ( $\text{Ca}(\text{IO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ).

### **Packaging, Transportation and Storage of Prepackaged Iodised Salt**

- Iodine in iodised salt will lose from production to household level before consumption. Losses depend on the iodisation process, the quality of salt and packaging materials, the climatic conditions, etc.. Salt traders can take some steps to minimise the loss, for example:
  - ◆ Pack the iodised salt in air tight bags.
  - ◆ Avoid using hooks for lifting the bags by limiting bulk packing units to less than 50 kg.
  - ◆ Streamline the distribution network so as to reduce the interval between iodisation and consumption of salt.
  - ◆ Keep iodised salt away from excessive humidity or direct sunlight at any stage of storage, transportation or sale.
- Provide smaller packs of iodised salt for consumers to choose so that the storage time can be shortened.

## Food Labelling of Prepackaged Iodised Salt

- All iodised salts meeting the definition of prepackaged food shall comply with the requirements (including nutrition labelling requirements) of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) on food labelling unless with exemptions in Cap. 132W.
- The ingredients shall be listed in descending order of weight or volume determined as at the time of their use when the food was packaged. Thus, if any iodine fortificants are added to the salt, they shall be listed in the ingredient list.
- Iodine/Iodide is a mineral according to Cap. 132W. Traders are encouraged to include the level of iodine in food label of prepackaged iodised salts.



## Information on the Usage/Storage of Prepackaged Iodised Salt

- The consumer should be advised to store iodised salt in such a manner as to protect it from direct exposure to moisture, heat and sunlight.
- ◆ For example, *“Store the iodised salt in a tight and coloured container, and keep it in a dark and dry place.”*

**Storage conditions:** Store the iodised salt in a tight and coloured container, and keep it in a dark and dry place.

**保存方法：**將碘鹽貯存在密封的有色容器中，並存放在陰暗乾燥的地方。





