

seaweed enough for everyone!

Seaweed? Yes, plain old red, brown and green seaweed. What a *wonderfood* to thank heaven for! Many of the ailments of town-dwellers, where factory medicines¹ are the epitome of healthcare, could be broadly improved by eating enough seaweed. And yet, this *wonderfood* is rare in most households. Japan is a major exception with *nori* being a common ingredient. Seaweed is added to some soups and dishes in Korea and China as well, but is not highly favoured by most human cultures. It is the most reliable food source of iodine available to us. It also contains valuable trace minerals and other goodness that many do not get enough of in their diets. Isn't there seaweed enough for everyone?

Seaweed is our natural food supplier of iodine ... In areas far from the oceans, like the American Midwestern states, goiter was common until the link was found between iodine and thyroid health. The problem was solved with iodised table salt for everyone. While one internet page suggests that one cup of strawberries will supply about 8% of daily iodine requirements,² the sample must have been fed by rains from nearby oceans carrying iodine to the soil. Iodine is not found in feed hay or in other plants grown far from the oceans.

The recommended minimum daily intake for iodine in most countries does not do much more than avoid the problem of goiter which is a symptom of extreme iodine deficiency, not simply a lack. It is a good thing that iodised salt became common as a means to improve the diets of so many living far from the oceans, but the low-salt bandwagon is on the march claiming to care about us. Much salt is now sold without iodine, without fanfare, so iodine intakes have been declining. One doctor with a healthy respect for iodine is Dr. Brownstein³ of Michigan who successfully uses iodine therapies for many medical conditions.

We need to be serious about our intake of this important element for the sake of our own families, most especially for pregnant and nursing mothers. Seaweed in soups, salads and traditional sushi are the best way to get enough. '*Let food be your medicine and your medicine be food*' was the starting point for that old medicine man Hippocrates. A less quoted saying runs *Foolish the doctor who despises knowledge acquired by the ancients.*⁴ One day, the factory pill prescribers will have to admit they really are of a radically different school.

... and a reliable source for trace cobalt ... I have held to a vegan diet for more than a decade with increasingly rare exceptions. As is known to most vegans, this can lead to having less of what is called B12 than is recommended. There is a cobalt atom within the B12 molecule, so rather than looking for natural food sources for B12, I decided to look for sources of elemental cobalt because I figure our bodies manufacture most of what we really need. True seaweed is a reliable source of cobalt and other trace minerals just as it is a reliable source of iodine. It was given by GOD as food for us all. It is the source of the cobalt within the B12 we discover in sea creatures later recommended to us as food. During a year in Southern Africa, I took no B12 supplements but continued a fairly strict vegan diet. I had to get some annual blood work done at the end of that year and added a B12 test to the battery at my own expense. The result? All of my stats were perfect – the cholesterols and so forth were all down the middle of the healthy range – but the B12 was a bit off the low end of their recommended range. So far as I am concerned, modern medics got the B12 range wrong. Again - everything else was perfect, not needing me to be in the recommended range for B12 in order for that to occur. I did not use factory B12 precursor supplements either – those

¹ chemotherapy is a fancy word for feeding people with factory chemicals instead of food-plant medicines. It stems from the practices of Paracelsus, against all the evidence of his own day, and yet continues to supplant herbal remedies around the globe at great expense to mankind.

² see <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=32>. The site is an excellent source of free information about the best nutrition for the least calories, and full of healthful advice. My point here is to recognize the information was localized, not reliable for just anywhere on the planet.

³ see <http://americannutritionassociation.org/sites/default/files/Brownstein%201.pdf>

⁴ both attributed to Hippocrates at <http://www.optimalhealthsystems.com/shownews.asp?id=187>

release traces of arsenic while being converted by the human body to real B12. It was achieved only by including cobalt sources in my diet, seaweed arguably the best among those.

When living some time later near the Arabian Sea, I read two studies of seaweed - one with sampling along the beaches of Saurashtra⁵ where I was staying and the other sampled near Karachi. Both showed consistent trace cobalt levels. For the seaweed off Karachi, there were seasonal spikes for cobalt and other minerals due to regular changes in ocean currents.⁶ These proved to me that seaweed is a reliable source of at least the lower bounds of minerals in the studies, cobalt included. For creatures in the sea, the various reds, greens and browns with their natural variations are likely favoured, in season, by uncluttered taste faculties that lead those sea creatures to which ones are the best each day for maintaining an individual's health.

... as well as other benefits ... Seaweeds contain fat-soluble antioxidants which regenerate more parts of the body than the water-soluble versions growing on trees. Seaweed has DHA Omega3 which keeps us young. It is the same vegan source from which fish get theirs, along with the cobalt they build into B12 just as I know we can. Modern medics are beginning to wake up to this ancient *wonderfood*. A finding published as recently as early 2013 shows a particular red seaweed to be more effective at both preventing and fighting breast cancer than the common factory potion called *Tamoxifen*⁷ and without the side effects.

... so why don't more of us get enough of this wonderfood? Making seaweed a regular part of your diet will prevent conditions that precede goiter and some cancer growths. Why is there no recommended daily intake for seaweed? Too easy for us? It seems that most people living close to the oceans do not value seaweed for food, but more easily get away with that since the rains carry iodine and other goodness to water their gardens. For those living far from oceans, there is still much ignorance about those health benefits and even forgetfulness about what earlier generations knew. This is simple to remedy unless a seaweed cartel emerges. In our day, algae has been added to the growing list of *theoretically* renewable fuel sources and thus more land and water are engaged in the quest for fuels to sell at bloated prices. The bidding war between the driver of a big fat car and the head of a hungry family will continue, so the market value of dried seaweed seems to be heading only up.

I was already long into stockpiling dried seaweed and iodine extracts for my adoptive village while it was cheaper to do so, and picked up the pace after the Fukushima nuclear debacle in Japan. It seems to me so important that there should be a recognized basic right for all of us creatures to have enough safe seaweed for good health. Not only at inland places like Zambia and Zimbabwe, but also in wealthy Switzerland and impoverished Laos. If we place blocks of shredded seaweed –plus- sea salt into the wild, mother elephants can stop knocking over inland forest trees, something done so their babies can lick trace minerals off the roots. Those cute little two-tonne babies are entitled to their iodine and trace minerals, just like our own infants are entitled - as a birthright on this planet. Isn't there really enough seaweed for all of us?

a migrant labourer

*happily munching more seaweed near the Saurashtra coast
March, 2013*

*** this posting is part of the book ...Delta... updated slightly for issue in 2015 with ... Three Briefs ...



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⁵ Bhavnagar National Institute of Oceanography Bulletin 19 (2) 1986, pp. 129-136

⁶ Indian Journal of Marine Sciences Volume 39 (1) 2010, pp. 27-42

⁷ while the full report is only for sale, the abstract at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23441613> can provide a starting point for further research.