

Why is iodine important?

Iodine is an essential mineral that plays a key role in the body for a healthy life.

A tiny amount every day helps your **thyroid gland**, which controls how fast your body uses energy. It's crucial for growth and staying energised. Without enough iodine, your body might not work as it should, so it's important to make sure you get enough.

You need iodine:

Before birth



During childhood



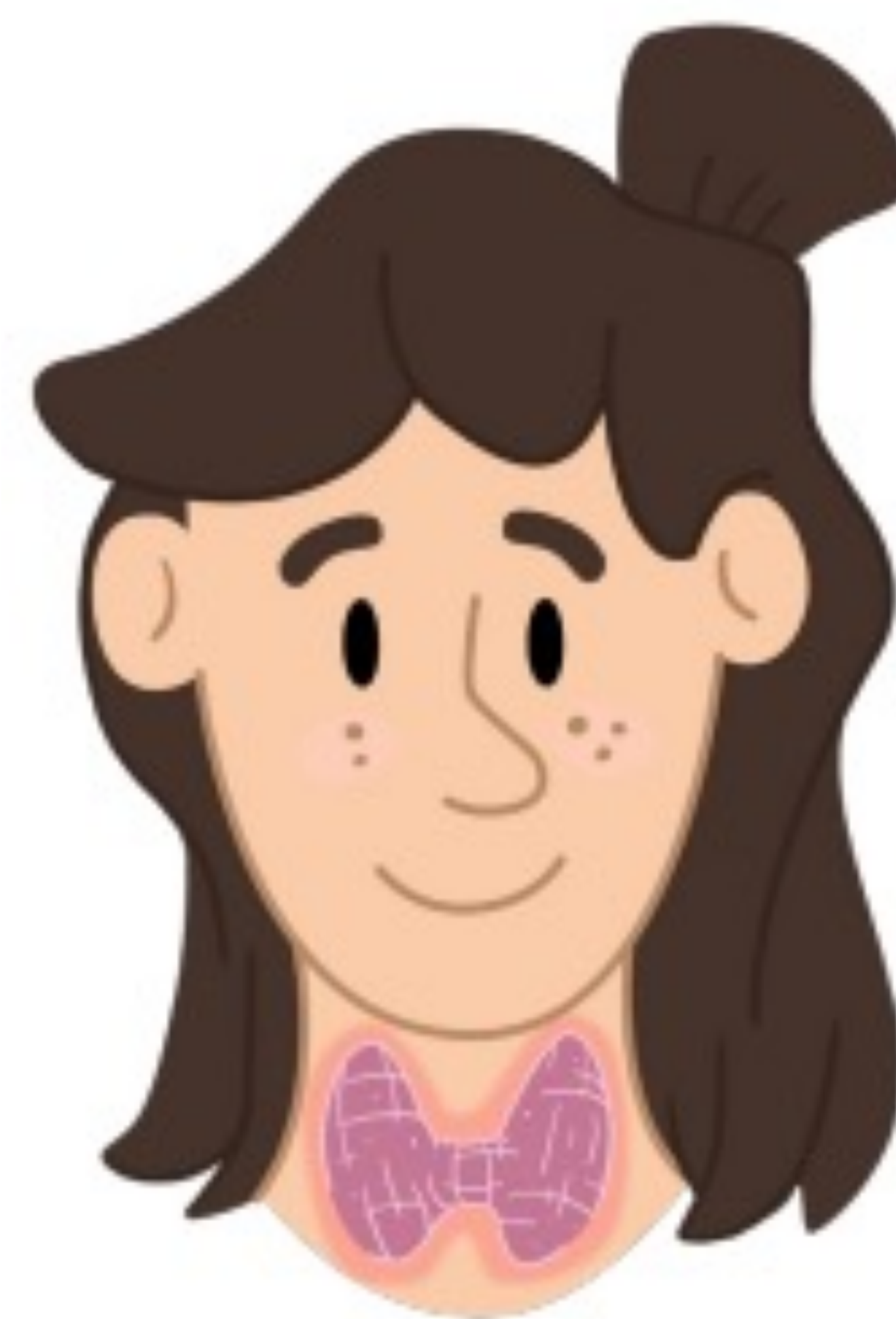
As an adult



Iodine: fuelling growth and energy

Iodine is essential for producing **thyroid hormones**, which are necessary for **growth and metabolism**.

Without enough iodine, the thyroid gland cannot function properly, leading to thyroid diseases and health issues such as fatigue, weight changes, and problems regulating body temperature.



Iodine in pregnancy: growth and brain development of the baby

Iodine is **crucial during pregnancy** because it supports the proper development of the baby's **brain and nervous system**.

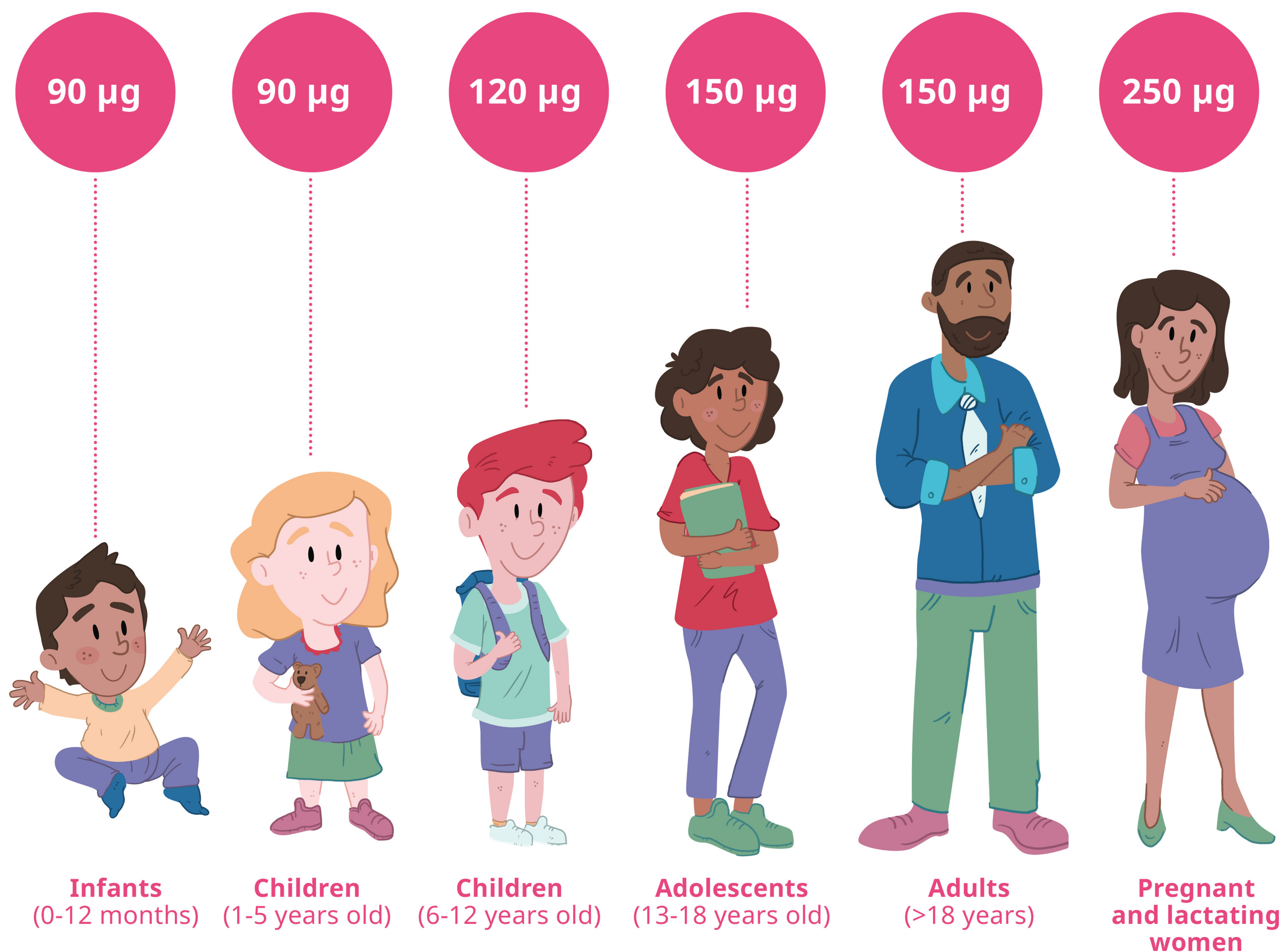
Thus, iodine is important for the development of cognitive abilities, learning, and overall health as the baby grows.



Recommended iodine intake – also for pregnancy and breastfeeding

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the following **iodine intake per day** (2007)

Recommendation (micrograms per day)



The intake of iodine is important at all stages of life, but especially for children and women **who plan to have a child**.

While the signs of severe iodine deficiency are fading, moderate and mild **iodine deficiency still exist**. As it is no longer an obvious, visible issue, many people do not know about the importance of having enough iodine in their diets.

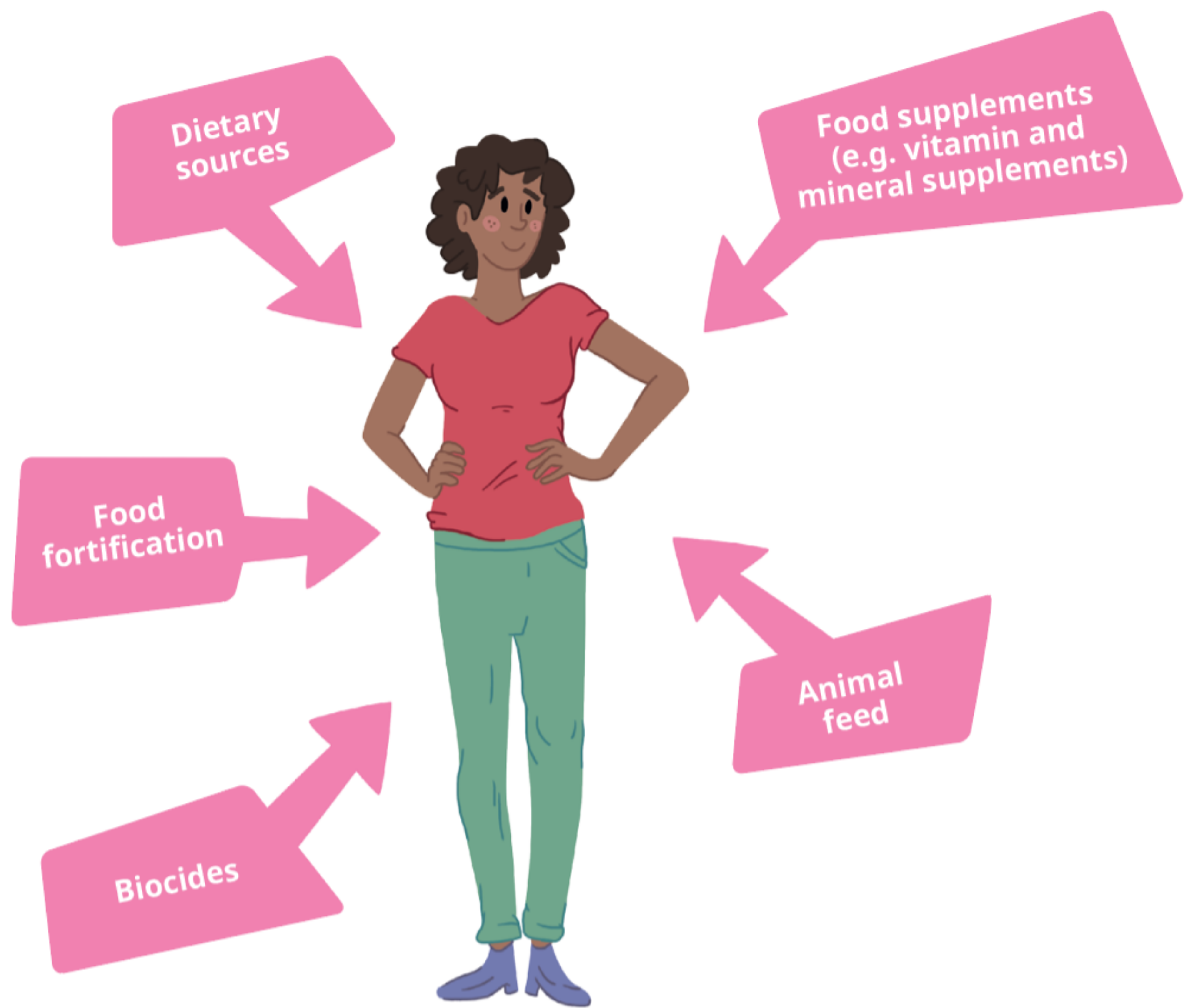
Iodine deficiency can impact the health of all population groups, and it is the largest preventable cause of **mental impairment**.



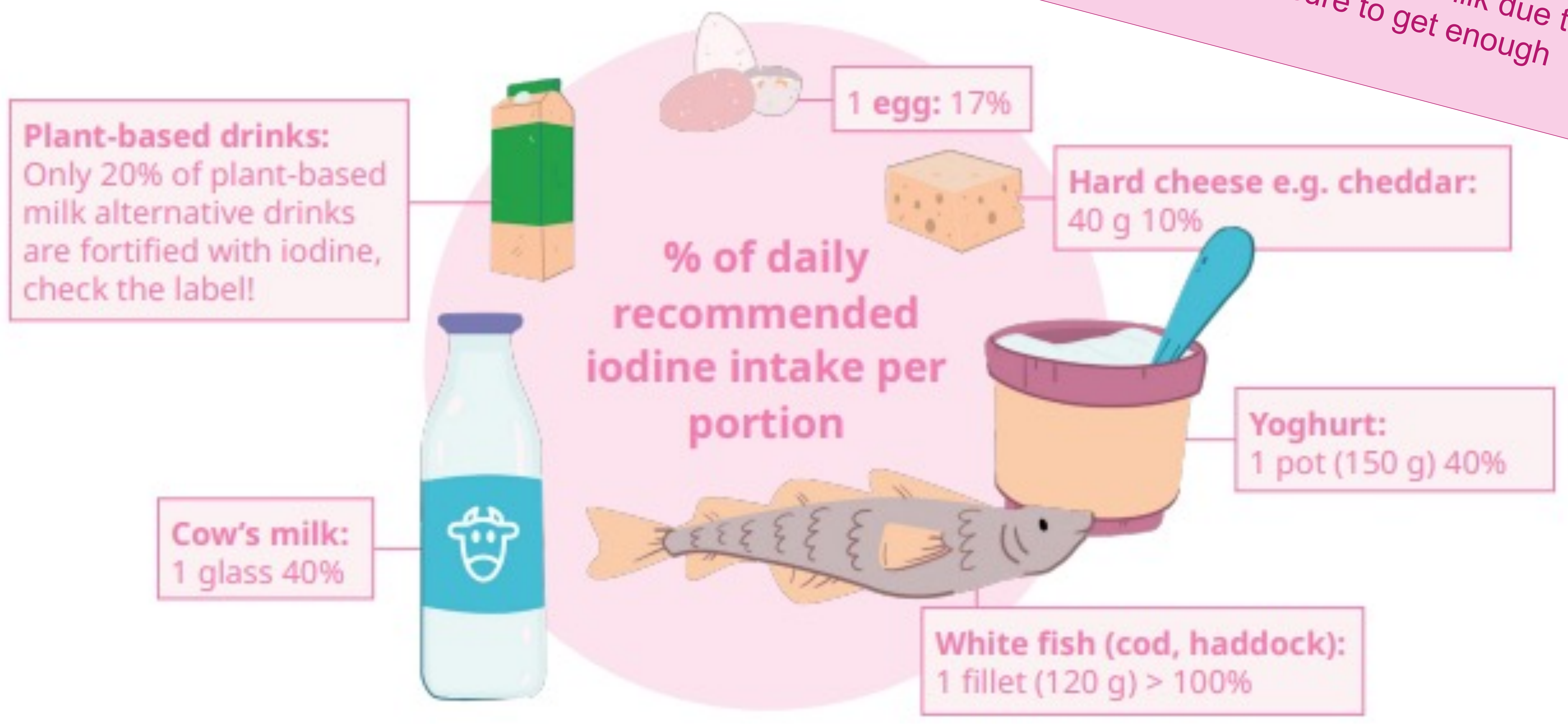
Iodine sources

The most common way to ensure adequate iodine consumption is through salt iodisation programmes.

Iodine is also introduced into the food chain through other **fortified foods**, animal feed, and disinfectants, affecting iodine levels in products like milk and eggs. Additionally, iodine-containing **food supplements** are available in some countries.



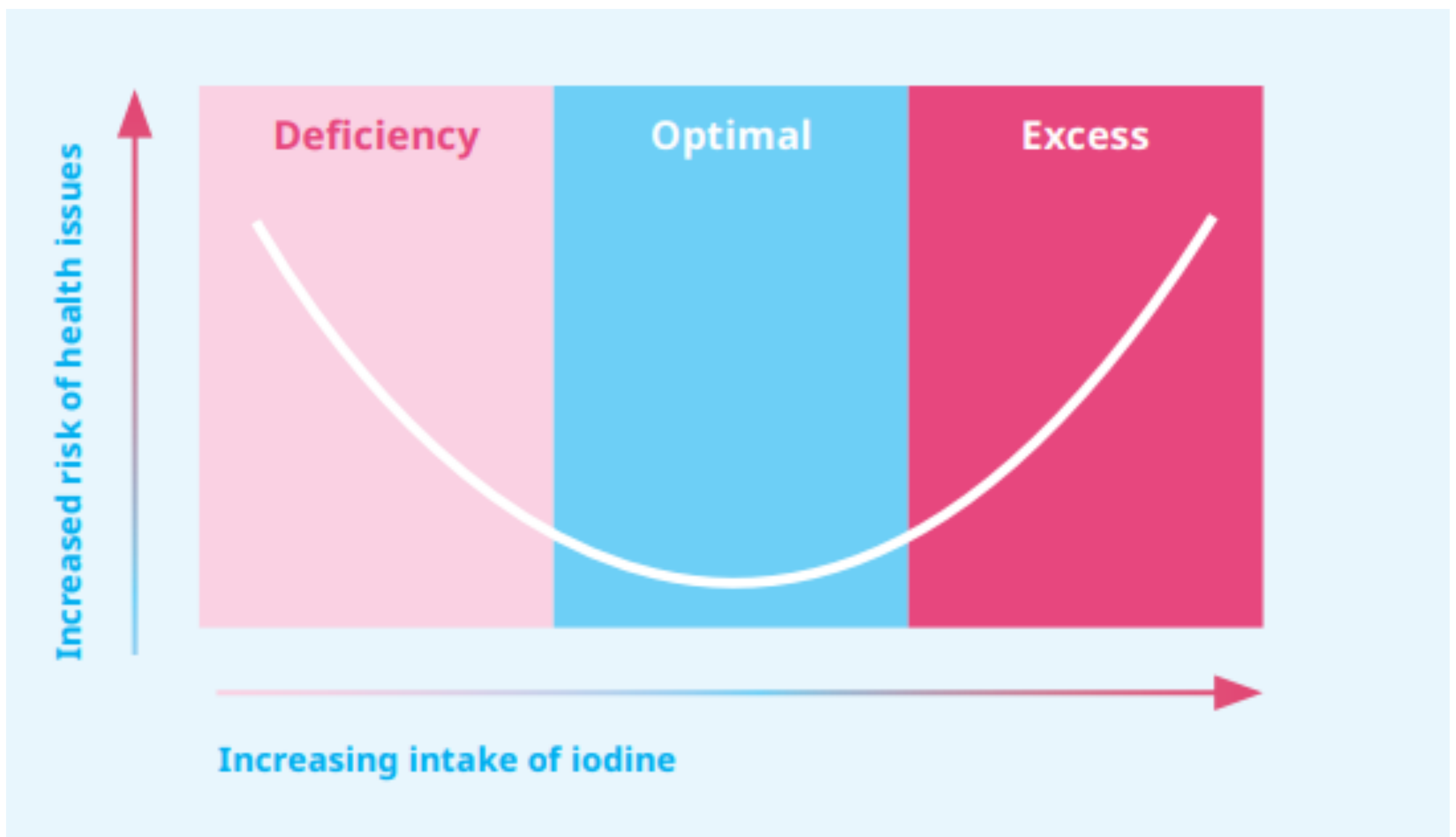
Important! Pregnant women need more iodine (250 µg daily). If you follow a vegan diet, or you do not drink milk due to other reasons, make sure to get enough iodine.



A proper amounts of iodine is important for good health

One might think that if a little iodine is good for health, then consuming more iodine is even better. But like many nutrients, you can have too much of it.

Ensuring an adequate but not excessive iodine intake is essential for health.



Glossary



Hypothyroidism: if the thyroid gland does not get enough iodine, it may start to produce too little thyroid hormone (hypothyroidism).

About 30 years ago, the Universal Salt Iodisation campaign was launched to address high rates of **iodine deficiency** and **goitre**. This campaign has improved the situation, but moderate and mild deficiencies persist due to insufficient consumption of iodised salt and **iodine-rich foods**.

