

Fluor and Iodine Commission: Annual Report 2020

Mission

Initially founded to accompany the developments in connection with the usage of iodized salt in Switzerland, the commission nowadays engages in scientific and technical questions concerning iodine and fluoride intake, monitors intake of these nutrients and concerns itself with political issues in this field.

Members

Dr. Maria Andersson, Zürich, Chair
Dr. Michael Beer, BLV representative, Bern
Prof. Hans Gerber, Konolfingen
Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Zürich
Dr. Giorgio Menghini, Zürich
PD Dr. Katharina Quack Lötscher, Zürich
Prof. Sabine Rohrmann, Zürich
Mr. Stefan Trachsel, Pratteln
Prof. Tuomas Waltimo, Basel
Prof. Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich

Activities 2020

No annual commission meeting was held in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic.

Scientific activities

The 5th Swiss National Iodine Study, funded by the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary (in German Bundesamt für Lebensmittelsicherheit und Veterinärwesen BLV) and carried out by the ETH Zurich and University Children's Hospital Zurich, was initiated in August 2020. The study is conducted in school-age children and pregnant women. Recruitment of pregnant women through physician at obstetric/prenatal care clinics is ongoing, whereas enrollment of children via schools has been kept on hold due to the pandemic.

Publications

New reports and information briefs relevant to iodine nutrition in the Swiss population have been published by BLV (Available at: <https://www.blv.admin.ch>).

Salt consumption and salt reduction:

- Grundlagenpapier betreffend Ausrichtung der Aktivitäten zur Reduktion des Salzkonsums in der Schweiz
- Fachinformation: Wichtigste Quellen von Salz – welche Lebensmittel tragen zu der zu hohen Salzzufuhr der Schweizer Bevölkerung bei?

The reports provide an overview of the various aspects and strategic options for reducing salt consumption at population level in Switzerland and information on the major salt sources in the Swiss diet. Recommendations state that iodized salt should be chosen when

salt is consumed and that processed foods containing salt should be produced with iodized salt.

Regulations for food fortification and dietary food supplements

- Verordnung des EDI über Nahrungsergänzungsmittel (VNem)
- Erläuterungen zur Änderung der Verordnung über Nahrungsergänzungsmittel (VNem)
- Erläuterungen zur Änderung der Verordnung des EDI über den Zusatz von Vitaminen, Mineralstoffen und sonstigen Stoffen in Lebensmitteln (VZVM)
- Erläuterungen zur Änderung der Verordnung des EDI über Lebensmittel für Personen mit besonderem Ernährungsbedarf (VLBE)
- Fragen und Antworten – Höchstmengenmodell für Vitamine und Mineralstoffe

The regulation of dietary food supplements was revised on May 27th, 2020. The allowed amount of iodine in dietary supplements has not been changed and remains at a maximum level of 200 µg/day. Fluoride is still not permitted in dietary food supplements since a sufficient amount is provided by toothpaste, salt and tea. The new regulations state that fluoride is no longer allowed as additive to special foods for athletes.

Vegetarian and vegan diets

- Handlungsanweisungen vegetarische und vegane Ernährung im Säuglings- und Kleinkindesalter

Several recent reports suggest inadequate iodine intakes in individuals following a vegan diet (e.g. Weikert C et al. Vitamin and Mineral Status in a Vegan Diet. Dtsch Arztebl Int. 2020 Aug 31;117(35-36):575-582). The newly published BLV report highlights the risk of inadequate iodine nutrition in infants and young children fed by a vegan diet.

Outlook 2021

The commission will hold its annual meeting during the spring 2021.



Maria Andersson, Zürich, February 4th, 2021