Elemental iodine is a dark grey solid with a faint metallic luster. When heated at ordinary air pressures it sublimes to a violet gas. The name iodine is taken from the Greek ioeides which means "violet colored". It was discovered in 1811 by Courtois.

Commercially iodine is recovered from seaweed and brines. It is an important trace element in the human diet, required for proper function of the thyroid gland. Thus iodine is added to table salt ("iodized") to insure against iodine deficiencies. Radioactive isotopes of iodine are used in medical tracer work involving the thyroid and also to treat diseases of that gland.

Contributors

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