



Thyroid Problems

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland in the lower front of the neck, below the voice box (larynx), and above the collarbone. It makes hormones that help convert food to energy. It regulates growth and fertility. It also maintains body temperature.

Treatment

Medical care is needed for thyroid problems.

Hypothyroidism is treated with iodine and/or thyroid medicine.

Hyperthyroidism treatment varies. It includes radioactive iodine, medication, and surgery, if needed.

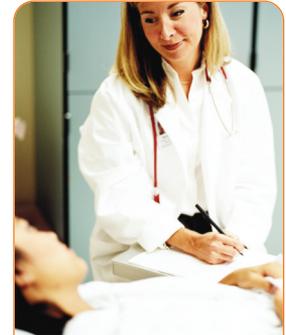
Some treatments result in the need to continue to take thyroid medicine.

Follow-up care is needed for both of these thyroid problems.

Signs & Symptoms

Hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland does not make enough thyroid hormone. Body functions slow down. Signs and symptoms are:

- Fatigue. Sleeping too much.
- Depression.
- Dry, pale skin. Dry hair that tends to fall out.
- The voice deepens.
- Weight gain for no reason.
- Feeling cold often.
- Heavy and/or irregular menstrual periods in females.
- Poor memory.
- Constipation.



A physical exam and blood tests diagnose thyroid problems.

Hyperthyroidism occurs when the thyroid makes too much thyroid hormone. Body functions speed up. Two common forms are **Graves' disease** and **multinodular goiter**. Signs and symptoms are:

- Swelling in the front of the neck. The thyroid gland gets larger. This is called goiter.
- One or both eyes bulge. Tremors. Feeling nervous.
- Mood swings.
- Weakness.
- Frequent bowel movements.
- Heat intolerance.
- Shortened menstrual periods in females.
- Weight loss for no reason.
- Fine hair or hair loss.
- Rapid pulse. Heart palpitations.

{**Note:** In elderly persons, symptoms for this can be more like ones for hypothyroidism.}



Thyroid Problems, Continued

Causes

For Hypothyroidism

- Immune system problems.
- Removal of the thyroid gland.
- Treating the thyroid gland with radioactive iodine for hyperthyroidism.
- Too much or too little iodine in the diet.

Risk factors for hypothyroidism include: A family history of the disease; having diabetes; and taking certain medicines, such as lithium.

For Hyperthyroidism

- Immune system problems.
- Family history of the illness.
- Taking too much thyroid hormones from pills.

Questions to Ask

Do you notice a lump in your neck (between your Adam's apple and collarbone)?

YES



NO

Do you have **signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism** listed on previous page? Or, are you being treated for a thyroid problem and do symptoms return or get worse?

YES



NO

Are you being treated for a thyroid problem and do you need to schedule follow-up testing?

YES



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- Take medication as directed.
- Tell your doctor if symptoms come back or still bother you.
- Follow your doctor's advice for self-care measures.



Schedule and keep follow-up visits to monitor treatment.

Neck Check

To see if you have a lump on your thyroid gland or if it is enlarged, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends this quick self-test:

1. Tilt your chin up slightly and swallow a glass of water in front of a mirror.
2. Look at your neck as you swallow.
3. Check for any bulges or protrusions between your Adam's apple and collarbone. If you see any, contact your doctor.

Get more information from:



HealthyLearn®

www.HealthyLearn.com

American Thyroid Association

www.thyroid.org