

Do You Have a Thyroid Problem?

Research Suggests That 10% of Americans Suffer from Undiagnosed Thyroid Disorders

To find out if your thyroid may be low, answer Yes or No to the following questions:

- Do your hands and feet get cold easily or are you easily chilled?
- Is your energy level low?
- Do you have problems with dry skin or hair loss?
- Do you have difficulty losing weight?
- Is your heart rate low?
- Do you have heavy or irregular periods?
- Is your thinking cloudy or do you have problems with memory?
- Are you constipated?
- Do you have puffiness in the face, especially around the eyes?
- Is there any swelling at the base of your neck (throat)?

The more of these questions you answer "yes" to, the more likely it is that you suffer from low thyroid (hypothyroidism). Thyroid problems are some of the most overlooked health problems in modern America. The Colorado Thyroid Disease Prevalence Study, published February 2000, found that almost 10% of American adults had undiagnosed thyroid problems.

The research suggests that about 13 million Americans may have hypothyroid and not know it. But, the problem is worse in many other countries and world-wide, it is estimated that as many as 1.5 billion people are at risk for thyroid disorders.

Hypothyroidism isn't the only thyroid disorder, either. One can also have a hyperactive (overactive) thyroid. About 2.5 million Americans have this problem, with the most common hyperactive thyroid disorder being Grave's disease.

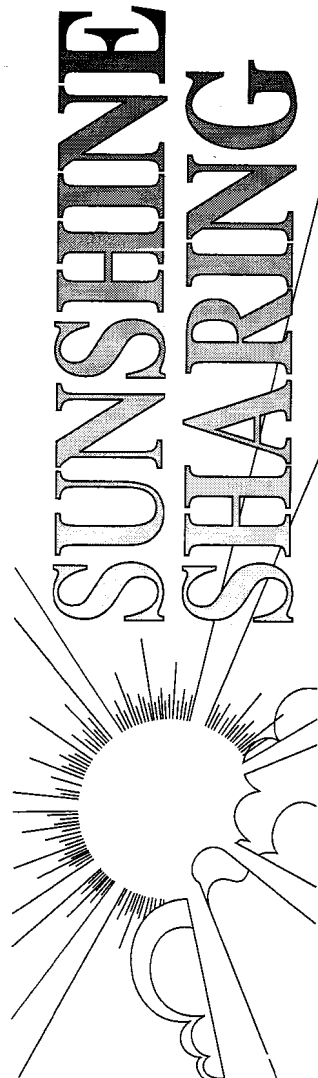
The risk for thyroid problems is much greater for women than for men. In fact, about 90% of the people diagnosed with thyroid disorders are women. Statistics suggest that about one in five women will develop a thyroid problem during her lifetime.

Understanding Thyroid Function

Before we can offer suggestions on how to correct thyroid problems naturally, we need to understand how the thyroid works and what it does. The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland that sits at the base of the neck. It is part of the endocrine system and helps regulate metabolism, the rate at which the body burns fuel. So, the thyroid can be likened to the gas pedal on your car. When the thyroid is hyperactive, it puts the gas pedal to the floor and the body's engine races, burning hot and fast. When thyroid activity is low, the body engine idles too low, sputters, runs slowly and stalls.

The thyroid is regulated by the thyroid releasing hormone (TRH) from the hypothalamus and the Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH or thyrotrophin) from the pituitary. When the hypothalamus recognizes the need for thyroid hormones it sends TRH to the pituitary, which releases TSH. TSH travels through the blood stream and binds to receptor sites in the thyroid gland, where it stimulates the thyroid to produce two hormones—thyroxine (T4) and tri-iodo-tyrosine (T3). T4 is a storage form of the hormone and is converted to T3, the active form, in peripheral tissues, particularly the liver.

Turn the page to learn more about correcting thyroid disorders



Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Understanding Thyroid Function

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A major reason for problems with the thyroid can simply be a lack of iodine. Iodine is essential to the production of thyroid hormones. This nutrient, while found in abundance in sea foods, is hard to find in high concentrations in plants or animals raised inland. Besides being in short supply in our diets, iodine is displaced in the body by chlorine, fluoride, bromide and mercury. So, the chlorination of water supplies and the use of fluorides may be a contributing factor to the high rate of thyroid disorders.

Both hyper- and hypo- thyroid disorders can be addressed naturally in most cases, particularly if identified before they become too severe. However, it is essential that you obtain appropriate medical monitoring when dealing with thyroid disorders, to make sure that what you are doing is working. It's also important to work with a skilled herbalist or natural healer.

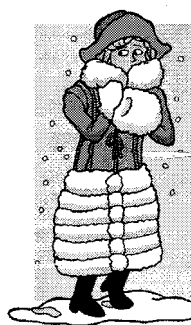
How Can I Tell If I Have Low Thyroid?

Medical tests don't always work when identifying thyroid problems. In particular, many women have symptoms of low thyroid, but lab tests show thyroid hormones are in normal range. However, there is one test you can do that appears to be very reliable at identifying thyroid problems. This is the basal body temperature test.

Your resting body temperature is determined by your base metabolic rate. Your base metabolic rate is, in turn, largely determined by the hormones produced by the thyroid and adrenal glands. So, the basal body temperature test gauges the health of these glands by using your average resting body temperature as an indicator of health. If your average body temperature is too low it indicates a thyroid condition is highly probable. (This test will not be accurate if you sleep with an electric blanket or in an overheated room.)

Testing Basal Temperature

1. Get a thermometer for measuring body temperature and put it beside your bed before retiring.
2. First thing in the morning BEFORE you get out of bed, take your body temperature as directed in the instructions that come with the thermometer.
3. For women, the temperature should be taken starting the second day of menstruation. The reason is that a considerable temperature rise may occur around the time of ovulation and give incorrect results. If you miss a day, that is okay, but be sure to finish the testing before ovulation.
5. If the average temperature for the five days is lower than 97.8, then a thyroid condition is probable, particularly if other symptoms of thyroid problems are present. These include: anemia, dry skin, edema, fatigue, goiter, hair loss, high or low blood pressure, edema around the eyes, poor eyebrow growth, a puffy face, memory problems, depression and sluggish reflexes.



Natural Solutions to Hypothyroid Disorders

When low thyroid is a problem, the first natural remedy to try is increasing one's intake of dietary iodine, particularly if you are female. Women have a much higher need for iodine than men (which is why women have more thyroid problems).

Iodine is found in seafoods and sea vegetables like kelp, dulse, bladderwrack, and Irish moss. Sea vegetables like **kelp** can be sprinkled on food or added to soups, stews, etc. to increase iodine intake. They add a pleasant salty taste to foods.

These sea vegetables are the major ingredients in two formulas designed to feed the thyroid gland and aid its function. The formulas are **TS II with Hops** and **Thyroid Activator**. Thyroid Activator is the stronger formula, but TS II is better for people who are nervous and high strung.

Another option is **Liquid Dulse**. This is a great iodine supplement for children because it is pleasant tasting. The liquid form also makes it easier to assimilate. Another herb that provides easily assimilated iodine is black walnut. It is one of the few land plants that is rich in iodine. **Black Walnut ATC Concentrate** is a the best form of black walnut to use for thyroid problems, because the concentrate contains more of the water-soluble iodine.

One form of low thyroid is Hashimoto's thyroiditis, an inflammatory condition of the thyroid gland. This condition is most prevalent in countries with high intake of iodine supplements, so iodine may not always be the answer to thyroid problems. In some cases other remedies may be needed to balance thyroid function. This is an inflammatory condition of the thyroid and may be helped with anti-inflammatories like **IF-C** or **IF Relief**.

One of the herbs that can balance the thyroid is **ho shou wu**. This Chinese herb helps normalize thyroid function when taken regularly over a period of four to six months. Another remedy that can help balance the thyroid is **saw palmetto**.

Another powerful supplement that can help solve low thyroid problems is **Thyroid Support**. This formula contains thyroid glandular substance as well as pituitary and hypothalamus substance. These glandulars help rebuild tissue in the hypothalamus, pituitary and thyroid. In addition, this formula contains other nutrients which support the production of the thyroid hormones.

Target TS II, is a special supplement designed specifically to increase thyroid output via the hypothalamus and the pituitary. It contains the minerals manganese and zinc, chelated (or bonded) to the amino acids proline, histidine and glutamic acid. Scientific research has shown that these chelated minerals are taken up by the hypothalamus stimulating TRH, which increases TSH, and finally, output of thyroid hormones. This supplement was proven to help reduce body fat in laboratory animals and is a good choice if for boosting the thyroid to help with weight loss.

Even if levels of thyroid hormones are normal, thyroid problems may still occur if the liver and other tissues are not properly

converting the inactive T4 into the active T3. People who have this condition may show normal hormone levels on blood tests and still have symptoms of low thyroid such as weight gain, cold and fatigue. **7-Keto** increases T4 to T3 conversion and may help reduce weight by burning fat. However, it is not a good supplement if you have low levels of T4.

Weak adrenals or liver congestion may also cause problems with T4 to T3 conversion. **Adrenal Support** often works well when combined with **Thyroid Support** to rebuild energy and metabolism. So, if fatigue is a major symptom you're experiencing, try using both of these glandulars at the same time.

Finally, since most of the T4 to T3 conversion takes place in the liver, the liver is often involved in thyroid problems. Some liver supplements that can indirectly help the thyroid by aiding the liver include **SF** and **SAM-e** taken with **MSM**.

Weaning Off Thyroid Medication

If your thyroid gland has been surgically removed, or destroyed by radioactive iodine or some disease process, thyroid medication from the doctor is essential. You cannot feed and support a gland that doesn't exist. However, if you still have a thyroid gland and are on thyroid medication, you may be able to reduce the dose of your medication or eliminate it entirely by nourishing and rebuilding your thyroid.

This should be done with periodic supervision by a medical doctor. If you can't find an open-minded medical doctor, at least work with a competent alternative health care professional.

The process can be done aggressively or conservatively. If you've been on thyroid medication for a long time, then you should probably be conservative.

Begin by taking 2-3 capsules of kelp three times daily along with 1-2 capsules of **Thyroid Support** daily. If you are tired, you should also take at least one capsule of **Adrenal Support**.

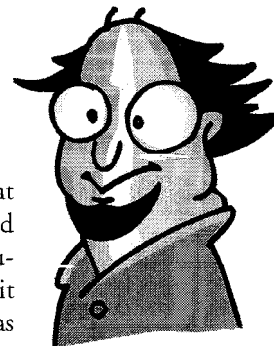
After one to two weeks on this program, reduce your thyroid medication by half. Wait one to four weeks (depending on whether you want to go slowly or aggressively). If no symptoms of low thyroid have appeared and you feel good, then try cutting the dose of thyroid medication in half again. If low thyroid symptoms reappear then go back to the higher dose, wait a few weeks and try again.

The goal is to gradually lower the dose until you find the minimum amount of thyroid medication required to maintain health. Some people still need a low dose of medication, other people find they are able to do without it entirely.

After about six months on **Thyroid Support**, it is a good idea to try substituting **Thyroid Activator** for long term use. Eventually, you may also be able to reduce the dose of kelp. Each person is different, which is why it is important to have a professional monitor the process for you and provide additional suggestions and help as needed.

By the way, even people who have had their thyroid glands destroyed or removed have reported that taking **Thyroid Activator** along with their thyroid medication seems to make their medication work better. And, even if you don't have a thyroid, you still need iodine.

Natural Solutions to Hyperthyroid Disorders



Hyperthyroid simply means that the thyroid is overproducing thyroid hormones and therefore overstimulating the metabolism. (Think of it as having your foot stuck on the gas pedal.) There can be a number of causes for a hyperthyroid, but the most common is Graves disease, an autoimmune condition.

A hyperactive condition of the thyroid, as is found in Grave's disease, is a serious medical condition and needs proper medical attention. Hyperactive thyroid causes rapid heart beat which overstress the heart resulting in life-threatening effects. Other symptoms of hyperthyroid include insomnia, weight loss, nervousness, anxiety and bulging eyes. If you have these symptoms consult a physician for proper testing.

While it is important to have proper medical monitoring of a hyperthyroid situation, medical treatments for hyperactive thyroid conditions leave much to be desired. While drugs can be used to inhibit thyroid function, physicians usually convince the patient to destroy the thyroid gland with radioactive iodine.

This therapy literally "fries" the thyroid gland. Thereafter, the person will have to take medications for low thyroid, as their thyroid gland will no longer function properly. Obviously, there has to be a better way.

There are herbs which inhibit thyroid function. Several plant species contain substances known to bind to TSH receptor sites in the thyroid, inhibiting them and reducing thyroid output. Two of the more powerful remedies are bugleweed and lemon balm, but there is also some inhibiting effect from rosemary. However, just inhibiting the thyroid, even with herbs, isn't correcting the underlying problem or cause.

Since a hyperthyroid "overheats" the body, **IF-C** a heat-reducing formula, is often helpful. It clears toxins from the blood and can help calm the thyroid.

The adrenals and thyroid work together, and most people with autoimmune disorders (including Grave's disease) have weak

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Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to deal with thyroid disorders, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. Their contact information should be found at the top of page four. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources:

Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It by David Brownstein, M.D.

Overcoming Thyroid Disorders by David Brownstein, M.D.

When Your Thyroid Cries "Kelp" DVD by Tree of Light Publishing

The Iodine Solution DVD by Tree of Light Publishing

<http://thyroid.about.com/cs/publicawareness/a/prevalence.htm>

**Easily Chilled?
Chronically Tired?
Sad or Depressed?
Rough, Dry Skin?
Losing Hair?
Low Sex Drive?
Difficulty Losing Weight?**

Your Thyroid May Need Help

Continued from Page Three

adrenals. Therefore, **Adrenal Support** or **Nervous Fatigue Formula** may also be helpful for calming the thyroid.

Stress is often a big problem for people with hyperthyroid. They need to consciously calm down and relax. So, adaptagens like **eleuthero root** can be beneficial for reducing stress and calming an overactive thyroid gland.

The excess stimulation of the heart by the thyroid can cause rapid heart beat, high blood pressure and/or heart palpitations so it is extremely important for people with hyperthyroid function to take herbs to support the cardiovascular system. **Hawthorn, Co-Q10** and motherwort are all very helpful. **Magnesium Complex** may also be needed to both calm the nerves and relax the heart.

Diet can also play a role in helping to balance an overactive thyroid. Foods and beverages that tend to "rev up" metabolism

such as sugar, coffee, tea, soda pop and alcohol need to be eliminated from the diet. A properly balanced low glycemic diet with adequate protein will be very helpful.

Hyperthyroid patients should eat a lot of cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower as these have an inhibiting effect on the production of thyroid hormones. Milk, bread, salt, and other products which contain large amounts of chemical iodine should be avoided by those with hyperthyroid.

Sometimes people with hyperactive thyroids are actually low in iodine. The best supplement to help them get natural iodine is **TS II with Hops**. The hops in TS II helps to counterbalance the tendency for over stimulation of the thyroid.

Again, hyperthyroid conditions can be serious and life-threatening, so the situation should be monitored by a physician to make certain your natural therapies are working

