



PATIENT EDUCATION INFORMATION

THYROID FUNCTION IMBALANCE

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Thyroid hormones control the body's metabolism. The brain produces thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) which triggers the thyroid gland to produce two types of hormones – T4 and T3. In hypothyroidism, the body has inadequate levels of the thyroid hormones. This often leads to imbalances in relation to other hormones. Hyperthyroidism is a less common condition that exists when excess thyroid hormones are present. Because every cell of the body is affected by thyroid hormones, symptoms of imbalances are often varied and affect multiple body systems. The thyroid gland plays an essential role in maintaining the human body's temperature, metabolism, immune strength and hormonal balance; the texture and quality of your skin, hair, and overall well-being; not to mention sex drive, mood elevation and emotional balance.

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland in the throat. Located on either side of the esophagus and windpipe, the thyroid in energy terms is closely related to the voice and the throat chakra.

The thyroid regulates the metabolism by its production of the thyroid hormones T3 and T4 which, in turn, regulate energy levels, body temperature and weight (which is why low basal body temperatures, sluggishness, or fatigue and weight gain are a good indicator of suppressed thyroid function).

It has been suggested, in books such as Langer & Scheer's "Solved: the Riddle of Illness," that between 70 and 90 per cent of North Americans suffer from minor to severe thyroid imbalance which can cause weight loss or gain, dry skin, or depression.

The high incidence of thyroid dysfunction may be due to our heavily processed diet, heavy metal buildup, exposure to x-rays or other electromagnetic radiation, or emotional challenges - but the thyroid, sometimes called our "master gland," is one of the most common weaknesses of the human body today. Thyroid imbalance almost certainly contributes to the numbers of people who are overweight or who suffer from eating disorders.

Most weight-related challenges - as well as many skin conditions, some forms of depression, low sex drive, fatigue, and chronic headaches - can be improved by boosting the function of the thyroid. There are several ways to support the thyroid naturally, including supplementation with kelp extracts, sea vegetables, or desiccated thyroid (usually bovine source). Sushi and other foods which are high in natural iodine are recommended, especially for those identified as having an under-active thyroid (hypothyroid). Boosting the thyroid has been known to be helpful in addressing symptoms from skin problems to sweat and body odor, allergies, menstrual cramps, kidney and bladder problems, and weight loss or gain.

Additionally, there are several foods to avoid if you're hoping to boost thyroid function. Vegetables from the Brassica family, including cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli, mustard, and kale, contain a compound known as progoitrin which may depress thyroid function and sabotage those with hypothyroid or who wish to lose weight. Turnips, walnuts, and soy are also best avoided.

You may be surprised to learn that wintergreen is a thyroid suppressant, since salicylates (the anesthetic compound in wintergreen and most pain-killing drugs) can interfere with the transport of thyroid hormones (T4) in the bloodstream. Refined sugar and cigarette smoke, obvious health hazards, also suppress the thyroid gland, as do corticosteroids and several pharmaceutical drugs.

Symptoms of low thyroid function:

Brittle hair and nails, Cold temperature intolerance, Cold hands and feet, Constipation, Decreased sweating, Depression, Dry skin, Fatigue, Inability to lose weight, Low libido, Menstrual irregularities, Shortness of breath, Sluggishness, and Weight gain.

Symptoms of high thyroid function:

Anxiety, Diarrhea, Eye/Vision changes, Fatigue, Sweating, Weakness, and Weight loss. Hair loss, Insomnia, Palpitations, Rapid heartbeat,