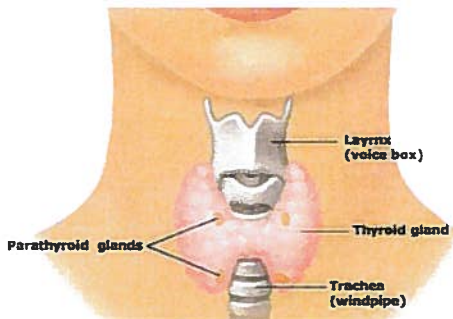


Thyroid Disease

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is a gland that is located in your neck just above the collarbone. It releases hormones that deliver energy to the cells of the body. The thyroid sets your metabolism which is how you get energy from the food you eat.



What is thyroid disease?

Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid is not active enough and your body uses energy more slowly than it should.

This is the most common form of thyroid disease.

Hyperthyroidism is when your thyroid is too active and your body uses energy more quickly than it should.

What are the symptoms of thyroid disease?

With **hypothyroidism** you can gain weight, feel fatigued and depressed and have difficulty dealing with cold temperatures. With **hyperthyroidism** you can lose weight, speed up your heart rate, make you sensitive to heat and feel anxious. Sometimes people develop nodules or the thyroid becomes enlarged, which is called a goiter.

What causes thyroid disease?

Most thyroid problems are due to an autoimmune problem. This is where the body wrongly attacks the thyroid, producing antibodies. These antibodies either gradually destroy the thyroid or make it overactive.

How is thyroid disease diagnosed?

Usually a simple blood test will determine if the thyroid is functioning properly. Sometimes an enlarged thyroid or thyroid nodules can be felt on examination.

How is thyroid disease treated?

Treatment involves trying to reset your body's metabolism to a normal rate. The cause of the thyroid disease determines the treatment. Sometimes medications are used to increase or decrease the level of thyroid hormone. When on medicine, blood tests are done to check your thyroid hormone levels. Thyroid nodules or an enlarged thyroid gland may require a biopsy or surgery. In some cases you may be referred to an endocrinologist who is a doctor that specializes in hormones.

What makes a person at higher risk of developing thyroid disease?

- Being female
- Being over 60 years old
- Smoking
- Exposed to radiation or certain chemicals
- Being treated with certain medications
- Just having a baby

