



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.



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

Hyperthyroidism occurs when the thyroid makes too much thyroid hormone. Body functions speed up. 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.
- Irritability
- Muscle weakness
- Frequent bowel movements
- Heat intolerance
- Shortened menstrual periods in females
- Weight loss for no reason
- Trouble sleeping
- Rapid pulse. Heart palpitations.



CAUSES

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.

Hyperthyroidism

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

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.



TRIAGE QUESTIONS



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

NO

YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



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

NO

YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



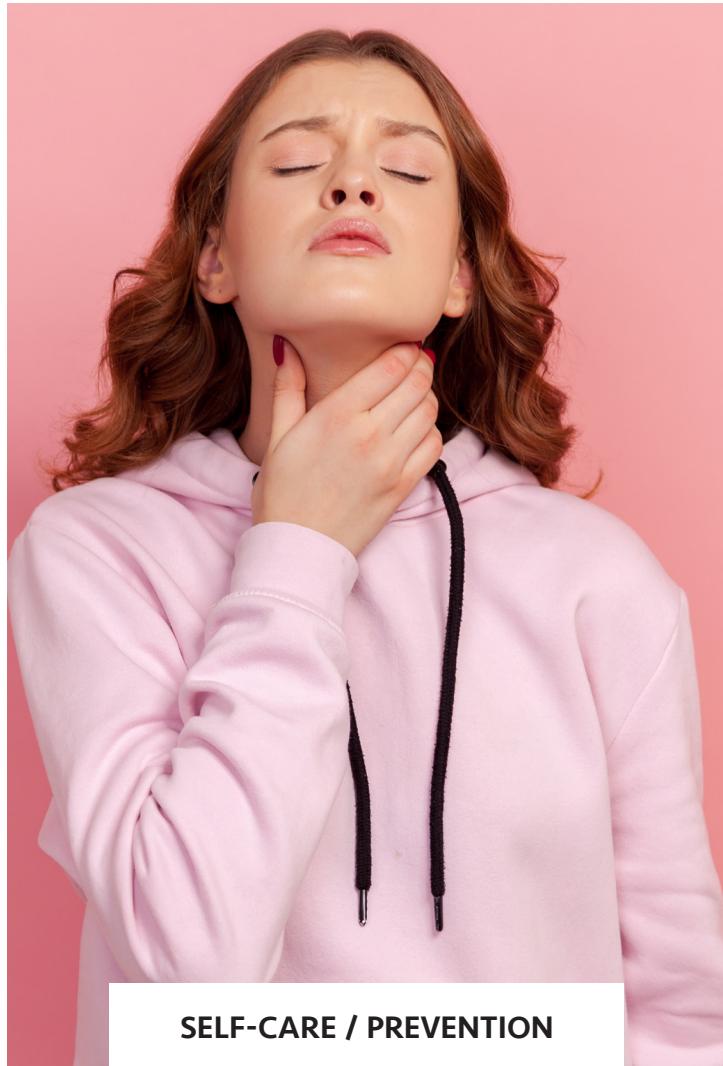
Are you being treated for a thyroid problem and do you need to schedule follow-up testing?

NO

YES ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



USE SELF-CARE



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.

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 or feel any, contact your doctor.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Thyroid Association
thyroid.org