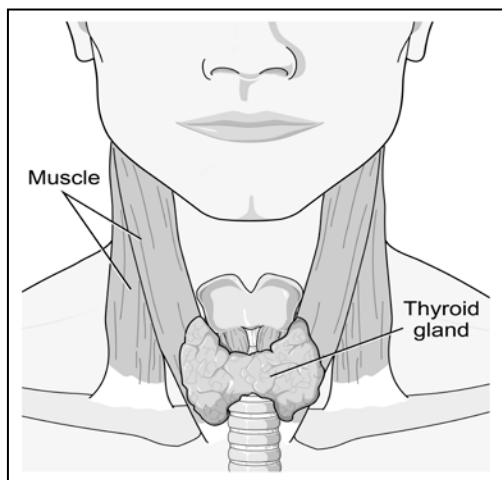


Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism means your body does not make enough thyroid hormone to keep normal levels of the hormone in your blood. Hypothyroidism is more common as people age. It affects women more often than men. Be sure to talk with your health care team to learn more about the causes.

Your Thyroid Gland

The thyroid gland is a butterfly shaped gland in the front of your neck. The cells in a normal healthy thyroid gland send out hormones, tri-iodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4). When your thyroid gland gets a message from the brain that your body needs these two hormones, the thyroid gland sends them into the bloodstream. The blood then carries these hormones to the rest your body. These hormones are needed to control your body's metabolism, growth, and activity of your nervous system.



Hypothyroidism

When your body does not make enough thyroid hormone, you may have one or more of these symptoms.

- Mood changes
- Depression
- Recent weight change
- Reduced appetite
- Decreased energy level
- Intolerance to cold
- Dry skin and hair
- Coarse or thinning hair
- Neck pain or swelling
- Hoarseness of voice
- Constipation
- Changes in menstrual cycle
- Change in sleep habits
- Joint or muscle pain

Treatment

When your thyroid gland is not making enough thyroid hormone, your health care provider may give you a thyroid hormone. The pill often given is Synthroid® or levothyroxine sodium. You will need to take your medicine each day at about the same time. The medicine needs to be taken on an empty stomach. Take at least 30-60 minutes before breakfast and other medicines each day. This medicine needs to be taken 4 hours apart from multivitamins, iron supplements, antacids, soy and calcium supplements. These supplements block the thyroid medicine from being absorbed.

Once you start taking a thyroid pill, you will need to have follow-up blood tests. These tests are needed to make sure you are taking the right dose. Your doctor will tell you when to return for blood tests. Once you

have the right dose, your signs and symptoms should improve. This will likely happen within a few weeks and resolve in 3-6 months or longer. Be sure that you keep taking your medicine even when you are feeling better.

Hypothyroidism is a lifelong condition. It must be treated with medicine. Do not stop taking this medicine unless told to do so by your doctor.

Your doctor may need to change the amount of medicine you are taking. Once you have started your medicine, you will need to watch for changes in how you feel.

Signs of **too much** thyroid hormone (hyperthyroidism):

- Feeling warm when nobody else does
- Irritability
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Unable to sit still
- Trouble sleeping
- Hair may become fine and silky

Signs of **too little** thyroid hormone (hypothyroidism) see page 1.

Contact your health care team if you are having any of the signs and symptoms or if you have any questions.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5360