

Thyroid

What the thyroid is and what it does:

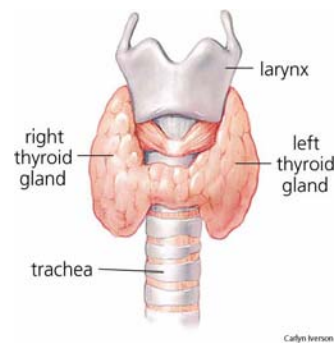
The thyroid gland is located in the neck in front of your wind pipe. It is responsible for many functions in your body and if it is not functioning well, you can experience several varied symptoms. Conditions that can cause hypothyroidism include an autoimmune disease (Hashimoto's), surgery for thyroid removal, radiation therapy for hyperthyroidism, some medications, and pregnancy.

The thyroid gland regulates your body's temperature, metabolism, energy levels, fat breakdown, and cerebral function. A healthy and fully functioning thyroid can help protect you against cardiovascular disease, fatigue and weight gain, cognitive impairment, and memory loss.

Symptoms of low thyroid (hypothyroid)

Common symptoms of hypothyroidism include:

- Fatigue
- Coarse / dry hair – some hair loss
- Dry skin
- Weight gain
- Depression
- Memory loss / cloudy thinking
- Infertility
- Fibromyalgia – muscle and joint aches and pains



How the thyroid is monitored and treated

It is easy to monitor the function of the thyroid by lab (blood) levels. There are three tests that provide a good picture of the health of the thyroid. These are the TSH, Free T4, and Free T3. The body metabolizes T3 into T4 for use, so these levels are monitored. Many providers will simply monitor the TSH for thyroid functioning, but the best measurement for thyroid function is the Free T3. If the Free T3 level is optimal at around 3.9-4.0, the body can use the T3 in the body and your symptoms will improve.

While we check your lab levels of your thyroid hormones, we will also be dosing your medication partly on how you feel and how your symptoms are affecting you. Traditionally there has been concern about patients having too much thyroid medication, but psychiatrists have been dosing thyroid medications at very high levels to treat patients with depression and mood disorders without difficulty.

Synthroid or levothyroxine is traditionally the drug of choice, but we are using Armour Thyroid for our patients because it is formulated with both T3 and T4 and it will provide better outcomes and symptom reduction.

Possible side effects of Armour Thyroid include:

- Sweating
- Palpitations (thumping heart)
- Tachycardia (rapid heart rate)
- Tremor / nervousness

If you experience any of these side effects, we can lower the dose until your body gets used to having this hormone.