

# Is Your Thyroid Working Right?

The thyroid gland is located on the front part of the neck, below the thyroid cartilage (Adam's apple). The gland produces thyroid hormones, which regulate metabolism.

Thyroid hormones are important in regulating body temperature, body energy, the body's use of other hormones and vitamins, and the growth and maturation of body tissues. Organs like the heart, brain, liver and kidney depend on the correct amount of thyroid hormone to do their jobs properly.

Two most common thyroid problems are "Hypothyroidism" - when the thyroid gland is underactive and produces too little thyroid hormone) and "Hyperthyroidism" - when the thyroid gland is overactive and produces excessive amounts of thyroid hormones.

Cancers are also seen in the thyroid gland which, if left untreated, can be life-threatening.



At least 30 million Americans have a thyroid disorder, and according to The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, half of them go undiagnosed. Women are 5 times more likely than men to have a thyroid problem and a person's risk increases with age.

## How To Recognize Thyroid Issues



### Weight Changes

Unexplained weight changes can be signs of both Hypothyroidism and Hyperthyroidism



### Menstrual problems

Periods may be heavier more frequent and painful or shorter, lighter and irregular



### Muscle aches and pains

Unexplained muscle stiffness and painful muscle cramps



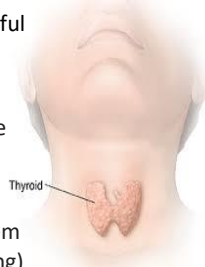
### Nervousness and tremor

The brain, peripheral nerves and muscular system can be affected and Tremors (involuntary shaking) in hands may occur



### Fatigue and increased heart rate

Fatigue occurs regardless of how much sleep or daytime naps one gets. Other signs include changes in blood pressure, weakness and dizziness



### Elevated Cholesterol level

Inability to lower blood cholesterol levels through diet, exercise or medication



### Mental foginess and poor concentration

Sudden or severe memory or concentration problems



### Heat intolerance or feeling cold

Intolerance to cold or an inability to stay warm as well as heat intolerance



### Hoarse Voice

A thyroid gland may be pressing on the voice box, causing hoarseness or voice changes



### Dry skin and hair

Painless lumps and patches of scaly discolored skin appear and affected skin feel hard and waxy. Hair loss may develop slowly and hair may seem thinner



It is important to remember that none of these symptoms are absolutely specific only for thyroid disease and may be caused by a number of other conditions. Your doctor can order diagnostic tests to evaluate proper functioning of your thyroid gland if you have troubling symptoms.

Thyroid diseases are lifelong, but treatable conditions. Effective treatments are available that can restore thyroid function to normal, even if the underlying cause of the disorder is not cured.

If you notice a change in your voice, difficulty swallowing, discomfort in front of the neck or a lump in the throat, these could all be signs of a thyroid disorder. You can perform a physical check of your thyroid at home with these directions from The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.

**Using a hand held mirror, watch your throat as you swallow a sip of water. Look for any bulges or protrusions in the thyroid area, which is below your Adam's apple but above your collar bones. You may want to try this several times to get a hang of where your thyroid really is. If you see anything that's lumpy or suspicious, see your doctor.**



more info>: <http://www.thyroidawareness.com/>