



Is Your Thyroid Function Balanced?

Learn How You Can Restore Normal Thyroid Function with Natural Remedies

Are you one of the 27 million Americans (200 million worldwide) that have some form of thyroid disease? You could be. Up to 60% of the people who have a thyroid problem don't even know it. One of the reasons for this is that the TSH testing most doctors rely on to diagnose thyroid problems isn't 100% reliable in determining thyroid problems. Many people have multiple symptoms of thyroid problems but have been told by their doctor that they don't have a thyroid problem.

TSH levels can vary throughout the day and may not show up as out of range when the test was done, even though the thyroid is struggling. Furthermore, many experts believe that the lab ranges are too broad and need to be adjusted. To really understand the health of the thyroid it's important to look at the big picture.

Symptoms of Thyroid Imbalance

The primary symptoms of low thyroid are being easily chilled and/or fatigued. Your thyroid regulates your mitochondria, which produce heat and energy for your body. If your thyroid is low, you won't be producing enough heat to stay warm and your body temperature will be too low. You will also not have the energy you need for muscle and brain function, which can result in physical and mental fatigue (brain fog).

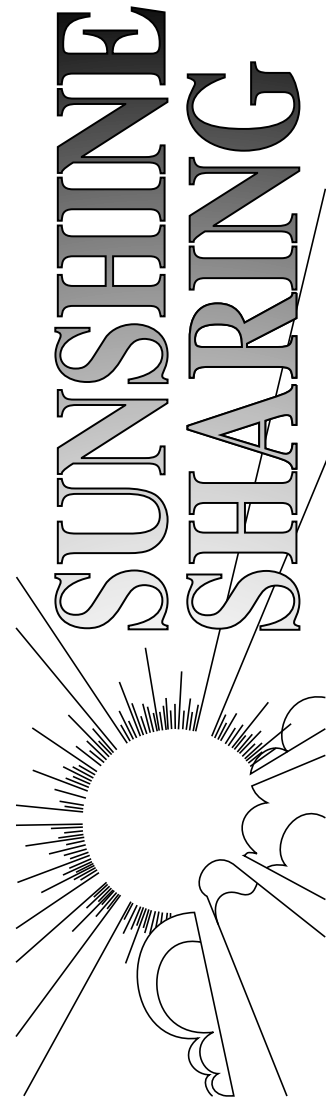
A simple way to test for this is to take your temperature first thing in the morning, before getting out of bed, for five days in a row. If your average body temperature is consistently lower than 97.8 degrees, you may have a thyroid problem. (Note: Women should not perform this test during ovulation.)

Other symptoms that could be associated with low thyroid include high cholesterol and weight problems, dry skin, hair loss, depression, infertility, migraines, anxiety, memory problems and menstrual irregularities. Because every cell in the body has receptors for the thyroid hormone, low thyroid affects the entire body which means additional health problems may be associated with a thyroid problem.

In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* we'll discuss the symptoms and natural approaches to low thyroid (hypothyroid). We'll also talk briefly about high thyroid (hyperthyroid). We'll explain how most modern thyroid problems aren't problems with the thyroid gland itself, but are autoimmune in nature. This means they involve the body as a whole, particularly the digestive tract and immune system, which means that a holistic approach is the best solution to today's thyroid problems.



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Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Understanding Your Thyroid

The butterfly shaped thyroid gland sits at the base of the neck. Its primary function is to regulate metabolism, how fast or slow your body burns fuel. In that sense, it's like the gas pedal on your car. When the thyroid is hyperactive, the body's engine races, burning hot and fast. When the thyroid activity is low, the body engine sputters, runs slowly and stalls.

Looking at the symptoms of both hypothyroidism (low thyroid) and hyperthyroidism (high thyroid) in the charts below will help you to better understand the functions of this gland. For example, when your thyroid is low, your body temperature is low and you are easily chilled. When it is high, your body overheats and you find it difficult to tolerate heat.

With low thyroid you tend to gain weight, because you have a hard time burning calories, especially fat. With high thyroid you tend to lose weight and have an increased appetite. Your heart rate tends to be slow with low thyroid and rapid and irregular with high thyroid. Dry skin is common with low thyroid and excessive perspiration with high. Both can cause problems with hair and hair loss, as well as menstrual problems in women.

Thyroid Hormones

To understand thyroid problems, it helps to understand thyroid hormones and how they are regulated. The thyroid is regulated by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. When the hypothalamus detects the need for thyroid hormones, it produces the thyroid releasing hormone (TRH). TRH travels to the pituitary gland and stimulates the release of the thyroid stimulating hormone, TSH or thyrotrophin.

TSH travels through the blood stream and binds to receptor sites in the thyroid gland. It stimulates the thyroid to produce two hormones: thyroxin (T4) and tri-iodotyrosine (T3). These hormones are formed from oiodotyrosine, a combination of iodine and the amino acid l-tyrosine. Tyrosine can attach to one or two molecules of iodine. T4 contains four iodine molecules, while T3, the more active form, contains three.

As thyroid hormone is needed, tissues convert circulating T4 to T3, with the liver being a major conversion site. Other hormones affect this process. For example, cortisol, a hormone released from the adrenals under stress, tends to stimulate the conversion of T4 to T3 stimulating metabolism. On the other hand, high levels of insulin, which occur in metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes, suppress the conversion T4 to T3, slowing down metabolism.

The Autoimmune Factor

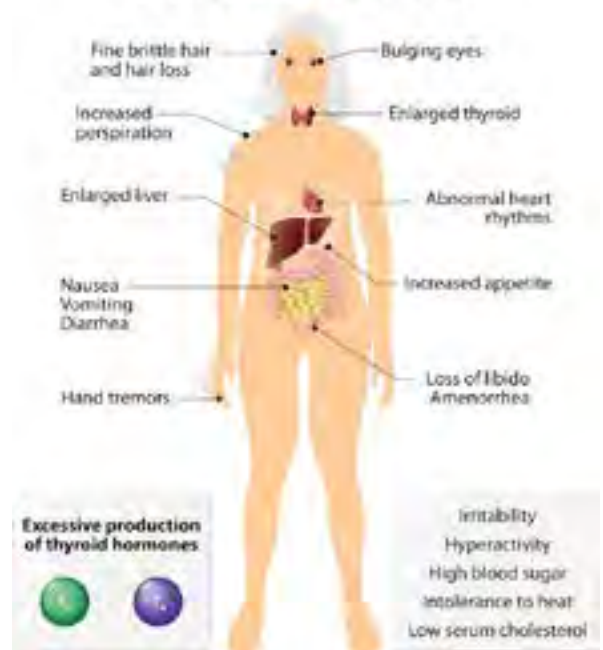
At one time the primary cause of low thyroid was a lack of iodine. Thyroid hormones are built on iodine and a deficiency of that element will result in low thyroid function. Since iodine is mostly found in foods from the sea such as fish, shellfish and seaweeds, people living far from the ocean would develop goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid gland. Hence, giving people seaweeds or iodine fixed their thyroid problem.

In modern Western society, however, 90% of all thyroid problems are autoimmune in nature. Hashimoto's disease, for example, is caused by the immune system producing antibodies that tag thyroid cells for destruction. While in Grave's disease antibodies attach to receptor sites for TSH on the surface of thyroid cells and stimulate them to overproduce thyroid hormones. In both cases, it is the immune system that needs help, not the thyroid.

Symptoms of HYPOTHYROIDISM



Symptoms of HYPERTHYROIDISM



Solving Thyroid Problems

Doctors don't normally screen for autoimmune reactions when checking for thyroid problems. If the thyroid is low, they prescribe thyroid hormones to bring hormone levels up. If it is high, they use medications to inhibit thyroid function or even destroy the hyperactive thyroid with radioactive iodine.

So, if you have, or suspect you have, a thyroid problem be sure to ask your doctor to test you for thyroid antibodies. You may have thyroid antibodies and have normal levels of thyroid hormones. This means you are developing an autoimmune thyroid problem, but it hasn't severely affected your thyroid function, yet. You may have low levels of thyroid hormones or high levels of TSH but no antibodies, which means you have a thyroid problem, but it isn't autoimmune in nature.

Once you know what you are dealing with, you can determine how you'll approach the problem. Here are some basic suggestions for natural solutions.

If Your Thyroid Condition Isn't Autoimmune



If tests come back negative for thyroid antibodies and you have symptoms of low thyroid you should try taking supplements that feed your thyroid, starting with increasing your intake of iodine. The safest

way to add iodine to the diet is to use seaweeds like **kelp**, **dulse** or Irish moss or take a **Thyroid Supporting Formula** that contains these ingredients. Seaweeds don't just supply iodine, they supply precursors to the thyroid hormone, trace minerals, protein, mucilaginous fiber and other nutrients that have health building properties.

You can also try rebuilding your thyroid with a **Thyroid Glandular Formula**, which contains nutrients like zinc, copper and B6 to aid thyroid function, along with thyroid tissue. This can be especially helpful in the early stages.

It's also important to remember that the thyroid doesn't just need iodine. It also needs minerals like selenium, zinc, iron, copper and manganese and vitamins like B6, D3 and A in order to function properly.

If Your Thyroid Condition Is Autoimmune

If your blood tests show you have thyroid antibodies don't take seaweeds or use iodine supplements, at least not until you've worked on the immune aspect of the condition. Extra iodine won't correct the autoimmune problem and may make it worse. There is some evidence that getting too much iodine in the diet (especially chemical iodine) increases the risk for Hashimoto's and going on a diet that severely restricts iodine intake for a few months has been reported to aid recovery. Seaweeds, however, are less likely to cause problems than chemical iodine, such as that found in iodized salt or iodine supplements.

Iodine belongs to a group of elements on the periodic table known as halogens. These include iodine, chlorine, bromine and fluorine. These elements have similar chemical properties and increased exposure to them may adversely affect thyroid function. So avoiding chlorine (chlorinated water), bromine (or bromides) and fluorine (fluorides) is advised. One positive benefit of seaweeds is that they may help to help the body detoxify from these other halogens.

Avoid Allergens, Especially Gluten and Soy

Like other autoimmune disorders, Hashimoto's thyroiditis appears to involve a problem with molecular mimicry. When the digestive tract is stressed, intestinal membranes can become too porous, a condition commonly known as leaky gut. Anyone who has a lot of digestive issues, such as gas, bloating, indigestion, heartburn, constipation or diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome or inflammatory bowel diseases may have this problem.

The imbalances in the GI tract allow molecules of proteins like gluten (from grains) or casein (from dairy) to be absorbed into the body. The immune system responds to this as it would an infection, building up antibodies against these foreign substances. These antibodies may then attach to other healthy tissues causing harmful reactions.



Gluten sensitivity may be a major root issue with Hashimoto's disease, so it is wise to completely eliminate gluten from the diet if you have any autoimmune thyroid problem. It's also a good idea to completely eliminate soy products, as they interfere with thyroid function. Other possible allergens that could be involved include dairy and eggs.

Heal Your Intestinal System

As you eliminate problematic foods, you need to work on healing your intestinal system to reduce intestinal permeability and improve digestive function. Consider doing the following.

First, take **Digestive Enzyme** and/or **Hydrochloric Acid (HCl) Supplements** to ensure you are digesting your food properly and absorbing the nutrients you need.

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Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to work with thyroid problems (including autoimmune thyroid conditions) contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

Root Cause: Hashimoto's Thyroiditis by Izabella Wentz

The Thyroid Connection by Amy Myers, MD

Why Do I Still Have Thyroid Symptoms: When My Lab Tests are Normal by Datis Kharrazian, DHSc., DC, MS

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You may also need to correct the balance of gut microbes by getting rid of parasites, yeast or bad gut bacteria. This can be done by taking a berberine supplement with a **Candida Cleanse** that contains herbs like pau d'arco, garlic and oregano, which with the berberine will help eliminate both harmful yeast and bacteria in your intestines.

You may also wish to do a **Parasite Cleanse** that contains herbs like black walnut, wormwood and garlic. In either case, you should follow this up with a good **Probiotic Supplement** to start rebuilding the friendly bacteria in your intestinal tract.

It may also be helpful to take a **Gut Healing Fiber Supplement** that contains l-glutamine, inulin and a mucilaginous fiber like psyllium. Bone broth also helps heal the intestinal wall.

You can get assistance on determining what foods to eliminate and exactly what you should do to help heal your GI tract by talking to the person who gave you this newsletter, or another competent natural health practitioner or herbalist.

Use Herbs to Reduce Inflammation and Calm Immune Function

When dealing with an autoimmune condition, it's very important to use supplements that help to reduce inflammation and calm down or balance immune function. Avoid immune stimulants like Echinacea in favor of adaptogens like ashwaganda, schizandra, **cordyceps**, **astragalus** and reishi mushrooms. Look for a good **Adaptogenic Formula** containing some of these herbs.

You can also use licorice root because it has a cortisol sparing action and helps reduce inflammatory reactions, although it works better with low thyroid than hyperthyroid conditions. An **Adrenal Glandular Formula** may also help, as good adrenal function helps to calm down autoimmune reactions by helping them produce adequate amounts of cortisol. **Curcumin** from turmeric root is another good supplement to consider because it reduces inflammatory reactions.

Manage Stress

Stress plays a big role in autoimmune conditions, including autoimmune thyroid problems. Don't overexert yourself with exercise when you have an autoimmune condition; gentle exercises like walking, stretching or swimming are best. Do things to help you relax such as getting a massage or soaking in a warm bath with relaxing essential oils like lavender or rose. Listen to beautiful, relaxing music, pray, and/or meditate. Get an adequate amount of sleep. In general, take time for yourself. It will make a big difference.



Specific Supplements

If you aren't already doing so, consider taking a **Multiple Vitamin and Mineral Supplement** and **omega-3 essential fatty acids** to ensure some basic good nutrition. There are also some specific supplements that you should consider for an autoimmune thyroid condition. The first is **vitamin D3**. The majority of people are deficient in this important vitamin, which is needed for healthy immune function. **Vitamin A** may also be helpful.

Zinc is a mineral that plays a role in the immune system, but also is important for helping to convert T4 to T3. It also helps your hypothalamus gauge the levels of thyroid hormone in your bloodstream. **Selenium** is another important mineral to consider. It also helps convert T4 to T3 and may help prevent and reverse autoimmune thyroid disease.

As you balance your body and immune system, you may also benefit from the seaweeds mentioned earlier. There is no magic bullet answer to autoimmune thyroid problems, but if you work on your overall health, it is possible to reverse them. Do some research and find the program that works for you.