



## HYPOTHYROIDISM

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### Thyroid gland:

The thyroid gland is a small butterfly-shaped gland in the front part of the neck. It controls blood pressure , heart rate , body temperature , weight , secretes three hormones T3, T4 , calcitonin , and other functions.

This happens when a gland in the neck, called the thyroid gland, makes too little thyroid hormone. This hormone controls how the body uses and stores energy. With a different condition, hyperthyroidism, the thyroid gland makes too much thyroid hormone. With hypothyroidism, it does not make enough. Doctors sometimes also use the term "underactive thyroid."

### Causes hypothyroidism

**Different things can cause the thyroid gland to be unable to make enough thyroid hormone. These include:**

- Problems with the immune system – This is the body's infection-fighting system. Sometimes, a person's immune system attacks healthy cells, such as cells in the thyroid. This is called "chronic autoimmune thyroiditis" or "Hashimoto's thyroiditis." It is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the US.
- Thyroidectomy – This is surgery to remove the thyroid gland.
- Radioiodine therapy – This is a treatment used for hyperthyroidism. It often causes hypothyroidism because it destroys part of the thyroid gland.
- Radiation in the neck area – High doses of radiation (for example, to treat cancer) can damage the thyroid gland.
- Certain medicines

The treatment of hypothyroidism is the same no matter what caused it.

### The symptoms of hypothyroidism

Some people have no symptoms. However, most people feel tired. That can make it hard to know if a person has it, because many conditions can make you tired.

Other symptoms of hypothyroidism include:

- Lack of energy
- Getting cold easily
- Developing coarse or thin hair
- Getting constipated (having too few bowel movements)

If it is not treated, hypothyroidism can also weaken and slow your heart.

It can also cause swelling (fluid buildup) in your ankles.

Untreated hypothyroidism can also increase your blood pressure and raise your cholesterol. Both of these things increase the risk of heart problems.

Hypothyroidism can disrupt monthly periods. It can also make it hard to get pregnant. In people who do get pregnant, hypothyroidism can cause problems. For instance, it can increase the chances of having a miscarriage.

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### Diagnosis of hypothyroidism?

Blood investigations for thyroid gland function tests

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### Treatment of hypothyroidism

Treatment involves taking thyroid hormone pills every day. After you take the pills for about 6 weeks, your doctor will test your blood again. They might adjust your dose depending on the results. Most people with hypothyroidism need to keep taking thyroid pills for the rest of their life.

Never change your dose of thyroid hormone on your own. Taking too much can cause heart rhythm problems and even damage your bones.

- Thyroid medication should be taken in the morning with empty stomach and do not take any other medication with it. After 30 minutes to 60 minutes, you can eat your breakfast.
  - Avoid calcium pills, iron pills and stomach antacids medications at least 4 hours after taking thyroid medication.
  - Take thyroid medication regularly; if you forget your dose take it when you remember.
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### What if I want to get pregnant?

You can try to get pregnant. But you have to visit your doctor before planning to get pregnant and when you know you are pregnant. However, your doctor most likely need to change your dose of thyroid hormone once you are pregnant. That is because you need more thyroid hormone during pregnancy. They will also measure your levels of thyroid hormone 4 weeks after any change in your dose, and at least once during each trimester of pregnancy.

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### You should come for follow up at clinic if

- You feel signs of hypothyroidism such as laziness, cold extremities.
- You feel signs and symptoms hyperthyroidism such as heart palpitation, anxiety, diarrhea, recurrent defecation.
- Before any surgical procedure, endoscopy, to check thyroid hormones.
- Before intending to get pregnant, first know pregnancy and during entire pregnancy period.