



Thyroid Fact Sheet

The Thyroid Gland

- The thyroid gland is the small, butterfly-shaped gland found just below the Adam's apple.
- The thyroid gland produces hormones that influence essentially every organ, tissue and cell in the body. In short, if the thyroid doesn't work properly, neither do you.
- If left untreated, thyroid disease can cause elevated cholesterol levels and subsequent heart disease, infertility, muscle weakness, osteoporosis and, in extreme cases, coma or death.

Who Has Thyroid Disease

- 27 million Americans have overactive or underactive thyroid glands but more than half remain undiagnosed.
- More than 8 out of 10 patients with thyroid disease are women.
- Women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to suffer from hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid).
- Fifteen to 20 percent of people with diabetes and their siblings or parents are likely to develop thyroid disease (compared to 4.5 percent of the general population).

Hypothyroidism and Pregnancy

- Nearly 1 out of 50 women in the U.S. is diagnosed with hypothyroidism during pregnancy.
- 6 out of every 100 miscarriages are associated with thyroid hormone deficiencies during pregnancy.
- Five to 18 percent of women are diagnosed with postpartum thyroiditis.
- Approximately 25 percent of women will develop permanent hypothyroidism.

Thyroid Disease & Children

- One out of every five thousand babies born in the U.S. has hypothyroidism.
- Undiagnosed hypothyroid children may experience slowed growth rate.
- Additional symptoms include sluggishness, pallor, dry and itchy scalp, increased sensitivity to cold and constipation.

Hypothyroidism & Aging

- Incidence of hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) increases with age.
- By age 60, as many as 17 percent of women and 9 percent of men have an underactive thyroid.

Common Symptoms of Hyperthyroidism

- Heat intolerance, sweating
- Weight loss
- Alterations in appetite
- Frequent bowel movements
- Changes in vision
- Fatigue and muscle weakness
- Menstrual disturbance
- Impaired fertility
- Mental disturbances
- Sleep disturbances
- Tremors
- Thyroid enlargement

Common Symptoms of Hypothyroidism

- Fatigue
- Forgetfulness
- Depression
- Heavy menses
- Dry, course hair
- Mood swings
- Weight gain
- Hoarse voice
- Dry, course skin
- Constipation