

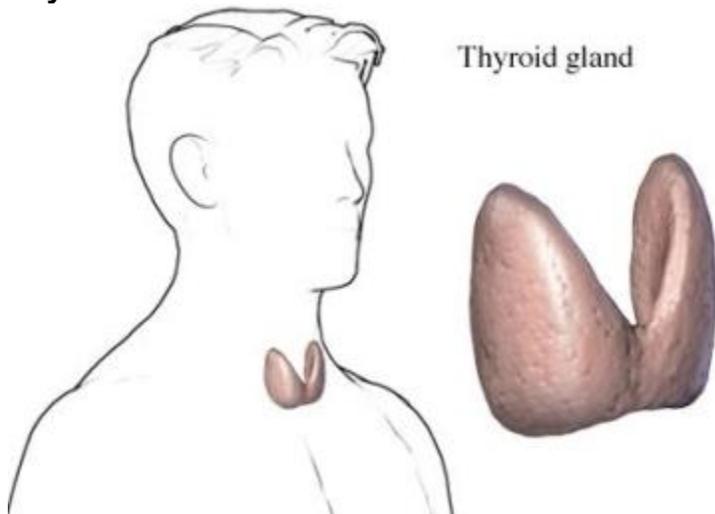
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Date: January 17, 2019
Notes: **Nurses can write personalized notes to patients here.**

Hypothyroidism (Hashimoto's Thyroiditis; Underactive Thyroid)

Definition

The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland in the front of the neck. It makes hormones that control metabolism. Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid does not make enough thyroid hormone.

Thyroid Gland



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Causes

Hypothyroidism may be caused by damage or injury to the thyroid. This may happen with:

- Disorder of the immune system
- Congenital defects of the gland or how it works
- Surgery, medical procedures, or radiation therapy for thyroid treatment

It may also be caused by:

- Problems with pituitary glands that sends signal to the thyroid
- Iodine deficiency—rare in the US, iodine is needed to make thyroid hormones

In some people, the cause may remain unknown.

[Risk Factors](#)

Hypothyroidism is more common in women. It is also more common in those aged 65 years and older. Other factors that may increase your chance of hypothyroidism include:

- Family history of hypothyroidism
- Recently gave birth, especially if you had hypothyroidism before
- Surgery, radiation therapy, or radioablation in the neck region
- Autoimmune diseases, such as [systemic lupus erythematosus](#), [celiac disease](#), [type 1 diabetes](#), or [rheumatoid arthritis](#)

[Symptoms](#)

Symptoms may not always appear. In those that have symptoms, hypothyroidism may cause:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Coarse, brittle hair, and hair loss
- Facial puffiness
- Dry skin
- Swollen hands or feet
- Cold intolerance
- Weight gain
- [Constipation](#)
- Achy feeling all over
- [Depression](#) and irritability
- Memory loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Blurred vision
- [Menstrual abnormalities](#) or [infertility](#)

Symptoms of severe or long-term hypothyroidism causes:

- Slow heart rate
- Depressed breathing
- [Hypothermia](#)—low body temperature
- [Coma](#)

[Diagnosis](#)

You will be asked about your symptoms and medical history. A physical exam will be done.

A blood test may be done to check levels of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), and/or free T4. Other tests may be recommended to rule out health conditions that are similar to hypothyroidism.

[Treatment](#)

Medicine can be used to make up for the missing thyroid hormones. The amount of medicine needed may change over time.

[Prevention](#)

There are no current guidelines to prevent hypothyroidism.

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