What is Hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is often referred to as an overactive thyroid and is a disorder of the thyroid, a small gland located just below the Adam’s Apple. This gland influences many of your bodily functions, such as physical growth and development, puberty, metabolism, organ function, fertility and body temperature. Just how well the thyroid regulates these functions depends on the production of two specific hormones, called T3 and T4. The thyroid works in conjunction with the pituitary gland in the brain. When the level of thyroid hormones drops too low, the gland in the brain produces Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) which tells the thyroid gland to produce more hormones. However, when the thyroid gland produces too much of these hormones, our bodies use energy faster than they should. And because the thyroid controls vital systems such as metabolism and body temperature, an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) will affect the body, causing a variety of related symptoms.

Diagnosing Hyperthyroidism

A sample of blood is the best screening method of testing for hyperthyroidism. Your health care professional will want to test the levels of T4 and T3 (the thyroid hormones) as well as the levels of TSH in your blood.

These blood tests will provide an accurate picture of how the thyroid is functioning. If the doctor feels further tests are necessary they may give a radioactive iodine uptake test. The type of radioactive iodine used for the test will not harm the thyroid or pose any risk. After 24 hours special equipment is then used to measure the amount of radioactivity over the thyroid gland.

Symptoms of Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism symptoms vary and may include the following:
- Impotence in Males
- Muscle Spasms, Cramps, Twitching & Tremors
- Acne
- Eye Twitch
- Headaches
- Hair Loss
Anger, Mood Swings or Feeling Anxious

Stomach Problems

Low Sex Drive

Body Temperature Changes

Nausea

Diarrhea or Experiencing more bowel movements than usual

Itchiness

Fatigue

Rapid heart beat

Difficulty breathing

Sweating more than usual

Hair becoming brittle

Losing weight regardless of the amount of food you eat

What Causes Hyperthyroidism?

The most common causes of hyperthyroidism include:

- **Graves’ disease** - Caused when the body's natural immune system attacks the thyroid gland. The thyroid fights back by making too much thyroid hormone.

- **Thyroid nodules** - The thyroid may sometimes develop lumps and cysts called nodules. These nodules can secrete too much thyroid hormone. Most nodules are generally harmless but if you feel a lump it is best to have it checked by a health professional.
- **Thyroiditis** - Caused by inflammation of the thyroid gland, this condition can also lead to the release of excess amounts of thyroid hormones.
- **Excessive iodine intake** - Too much iodine in the diet, certain iodine medications and some cough syrups may cause the thyroid to produce either too much or too little hormone in some individuals. However, the human system can tolerate relatively large doses of iodine and hyperthyroidism as a response to excess iodine in the diet is very rare.
- **Eating Disorders** (e.g. Bulimia) - The thyroid gland can change its regular behavior as a result of decreased nutrition from eating disorders.

**Help for Hyperthyroidism**

Thyroid disorders are very common, and with appropriate treatment, troublesome hyperthyroidism symptoms can be alleviated, balanced and treated. There are a number of treatment options for hyperthyroidism and because everyone is different, it is important to explore the options that work for you.

There are various treatments available for hyperthyroidism. The aim of these treatments is to decrease the amount of thyroid hormone made by the thyroid gland so that excess amounts do not get into the bloodstream.

The most common conventional treatments include radioactive iodine, betablockers, anti-thyroid medications and surgery (thyroidectomy).
Alternative treatments offer a wide variety of methods to help maintain balance in the body, for example acupuncture, physical medicine and massage. They have been used for centuries, and now more than ever before, the Western community is embracing this holistic approach of healthcare. This holistic approach addresses not only the symptoms of hyperthyroidism, but they address the root cause and underlying problems and can help provide all-round support and natural health. It is best to discuss these options with your doctor or consult a homeopath or naturopath for advice. Also, it is important to incorporate a healthy diet, exercise, meditation and other mind-body therapies to get the maximum benefit.

Drug Therapies for Hyperthyroidism

Recommended Diet for Hyperthyroidism

A meal plan for those with hyperthyroidism should consist of foods high in protein, B vitamins and iron such as whole grains and fresh vegetables. Add antioxidant rich foods into your diet, such as blueberries, cherries, and tomatoes, squash and bell peppers.

Foods to Avoid for Those with Hyperthyroidism

Since hyperthyroidism can be the result of too much iodine in the body, it is important to limit the intake of iodized salt, kelp, seafood, sea salt and some dairy products. Refrain from lunch meat and red meat as much as possible and avoid refined foods like white bread, pasta and sugar. Instead of using high fat cooking oils, switch to olive oil or vegetable oil. Eliminate trans fatty acids in most commercially cooked foods, these include onion ring, French fries, donuts and margarine.

Tips for Coping with Hyperthyroidism

There are always a few steps we can take to empower ourselves and manage our health. Small measures can be taken to alleviate and reduce hyperthyroidism symptoms.

Try to:

- Reduce stress by listening to music, taking a long bath or meditating in a quiet place
- Avoid caffeine and other stimulants as they may worsen certain symptoms such as fast heartbeat, nervousness, or concentration difficulties
- Ice packs on the throat can help to reduce inflammation
  - Certain foods can help to depress the thyroid, for instance cruciferous vegetables (e.g. cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, spinach)
Stay away from refined foods, shellfish, wheat, dairy products and alcohol

Avoid food and supplements containing iodine

The better we take care of our bodies, the better they will take care of us. Remember that healthy eating habits, adequate sleep and regular exercise will go a long way in sustaining good health and wellbeing!

**Consume Lot of Antioxidants**

Antioxidants manage the extreme production of thyroid hormone from the thyroid gland. Green Tea and Vitamin C are the two rich sources of antioxidants and blood purifiers. **Daily consumption of Green Tea** and citrus fruits is beneficial in keeping your thyroid symptoms under control.

**Antioxidants To Reduce Hyperthyroidism**
Coconut Oil

**Coconut oil** gives you a great metabolism and can also cure extreme weight loss. So, consuming one tablespoon of coconut oil daily after every meal is very useful for hyperthyroidism.
Natural Hashimoto's Treatment - Your Iodine Supplements May Be Making You Worse

A Voice Of Caution When Treating Hashimoto's Naturally With Iodine:

When a patient is diagnosed with low thyroid production, medically referred to as hypothyroidism, one of the first things commonly prescribed is iodine supplementation. This is logical and valid on the surface. Iodine is a component in thyroid hormone production. Worldwide iodine deficiency is a widespread problem. In areas of the world where iodine is deficient, iodine is the cause of many if not most cases of hypothyroidism. In areas where iodine is not deficient in the food supply, including the United States, iodine is not usually the cause of low thyroid.

In areas of the world with adequate iodine in food, or where salt is iodized, the most common cause of low thyroid is Hashimoto's Autoimmune Thyroid. It is estimated that up to 90 percent of cases of hypothyroidism in the United States is from this autoimmune mechanism.

Autoimmune thyroid is not primary hypothyroidism; instead it is a form of hypothyroidism that is caused by immune destruction. The amount of iodine that is contained in iodine supplements and thyroid natural support products act like gas on a burning fire.

In a 2004 article in the journal Thyroid, the author stated "...the explosive mix of iodine, TPO Ab, and H2O2 necessary for thyroid hormone synthesis, inadvertently provide the trigger for the autoimmune thyroid response." It is this misguided inclination to give every hypothyroidism patient high doses of supplemental iodine that leads to increased thyroid gland destruction, and more suffering on the patient's part. Most natural healthcare practitioners possess a very limited understanding of autoimmune physiology and continue giving iodine supplements for all cases of hypothyroidism, in the same way as the medical community uses thyroid replacement hormones as a "blanket" treatment for all low thyroid conditions.

If you have been diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease then you need to take an inventory of your supplements. Remove supplements that contain iodine, as it is most likely aggravating your condition, and is most likely one of many things working against you as you try to properly treat and manage your condition. We get plenty of iodine from the iodinization of salt and from a normal balanced diet.

Diet for Graves Disease

Eat goitrogens that people with hypothyroidism are told to avoid.

- Millet
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Cabbage
- Kale
- Turnips
3 Herbs for Hyperthyroidism You Might Want To Consider Taking

Many people with hyperthyroidism look to take nutritional supplements and herbs to help manage their symptoms naturally and/or restore their health back to normal. The truth is that curing hyperthyroidism involves more than just taking supplements and herbs, as there are many other components to consider. I’m talking from self-experience, as I personally was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease in the past, which is an autoimmune hyperthyroid condition. While most endocrinologists label Graves’ Disease as being incurable, I successfully restored my health back to normal by following a natural hyperthyroid treatment protocol.

Part of this natural hyperthyroid treatment protocol did involve taking nutritional supplements and herbs. I’m not going to discuss all of the different supplements and herbs I took when I followed such a protocol, but I am going to focus on three herbs which can play an important role in natural symptom management, which is important when trying to restore the health of any person who has hyperthyroidism. I personally took two of the following herbs. Some people with hyperthyroidism might only need to take one of them, while others might need to take all three. In order to figure out exactly which of these herbs you should take and the specific dosage you need, it’s best to consult with a competent natural endocrine doctor.

Anyway, let’s take a look at the following three herbs:

**Bugleweed.** When I was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease, Bugleweed was one of the primary herbs responsible for my recovery. Obviously I took numerous nutritional supplements and herbs besides this one, and these others were all beneficial. However, Bugleweed is a great herb that is specific for hyperthyroidism, and it did a wonderful job of managing my symptoms naturally. Without this herb, I’m pretty certain I would have needed to take anti-thyroid drugs to help with the symptoms I was experiencing.

Of course this doesn’t mean that this herb should always be used as a replacement for anti-thyroid drugs. It really does depend on the severity of the symptoms, as while I had a high pulse rate and heart palpitations, I didn’t consider my symptoms to be life threatening. On the other hand, it
Prunella Vulgaris To Reduce Hyperthyroidism

Gromwell For Hyperthyroidism

Motherwort For Hyperthyroidism
still was a risk for me to not manage the symptoms using prescription drugs, and this is the main reason why I can’t recommend for anyone with hyperthyroidism or Graves’ Disease to not take anti-thyroid drugs. This is only a decision you can make on your own, although it is wise to consult with your endocrinologist, as well as a competent natural endocrine doctor for some guidance.

**Motherwort.** This is another supplement which can help people with hyperthyroidism. I didn’t begin taking this herb immediately, as I started by taking Bugleweed (along with some other supplements and herbs). And while the Bugleweed did help a great deal with the symptoms, I still was having some noticeable heart palpitations, and so I began taking both the Bugleweed and the Motherwort together. Taking both of these herbs together did a great job of managing the symptoms. Of course the main concern I had was weaning off of these herbs, as I was worried that the symptoms would return. And if all I did was take Bugleweed and Motherwort, then the symptoms probably would have returned. But using these two herbs in combination with other supplements and herbs, along with modifying other lifestyle factors, allowed me to restore my health back to normal.

Just as is the case with any herb you take, I would recommend advising with a competent natural endocrine doctor before taking the ones I have mentioned. And chances are they will recommend you beginning with either Bugleweed or Motherwort, and then if the symptoms persist they probably will recommend another herb. Of course if you have very severe symptoms and if you don’t want to take prescription drugs temporarily then they might recommend you taking both Bugleweed and Motherwort from the start. Once again, it all depends on your unique situation.

**Lemon Balm.** This is an herb I didn’t personally take when I was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease, but many people with hyperthyroidism and Graves’ Disease do benefit from it. It’s primary function is as a calming agent, but it also directly impacts the binding of TSH levels, which is how it helps with hyperthyroidism. Although this herb can be beneficial, I personally would recommend using Bugleweed and/or Motherwort first, but obviously the holistic doctor you consult with will advise you as to which herbs to take, as well as the dosage.

In summary, these are three herbs which can effectively manage the symptoms of hyperthyroidism and Graves’ Disease. Just remember that taking these herbs alone won’t do much more than provide symptom management, but when combined with a natural hyperthyroid treatment protocol they have the potential to restore your health back to normal. To determine which of these herbs you should take, and at what dosage, I highly recommend consulting with a competent natural endocrine doctor, rather than trying to self-treat the condition on your own.
Home Remedies for Hyperthyroidism

- Bugleweed
- Sea Vegetables
- Lemon Balm
- Cabbage
- Motherwort
- Berries
- Soy products
- Indian Gooseberry
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- Broccoli
Remedy For External Use

A remedy for external use is prepared by taking equal proportion of oak bark, male fern roots, vinegar and wine. It is recommended to rub this effective mixture twice a day below your throat which is useful in soothing the thyroid glands. ‘Amino acid L-carnitine’ is also a good remedy in diminishing activity in thyroid glands.

Maintain A Proper Diet

The best remedy for hyperthyroidism is a proper diet. The main cause of this disease is due to excess iodine but on the other hand the glands need some amount of iodine to function well. So you must consume iodine very wisely so that your glands are in control. You must eat lot of green vegetables, cabbages, Brussels, broccoli, other useful vegetable and fruits. You can begin with fresh fruit juices and you can drink fruit juice every three hours throughout the day for a week. It is important to clean you bowels with warm water.

After you are habituated with drinking fruit juice, you can spend couple of days more on milk and fruits. There after you can stick to a balanced diet comprising of nuts, seeds, vegetables, fruits and grains. A rational diet is very essential along with adequate rest in curing hyperthyroidism.
ACTIONS OF THYROID HORMONES

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped endocrine gland located in the neck, anterior and lateral to the larynx. It receives a rich blood supply and secretes two closely related hormones, thyroxine (T4, tetra-iodothyronine) and tri-iodothyronine (T3). These hormones are the only iodine-containing substances of physiologic importance in the body.

ACTIONS OF T4 AND T3. Thyroid hormones regulate the body's metabolic rate. They increase metabolic rate (oxygen consumption) and heat-production in the heart, muscle, visceral tissues, but not in the brain, lymphatics, and testes. This calorigenic action of thyroid hormones is critical for adaptation of animals and human infants to environmental cold and heat, but it plays a lesser role in adult humans. Thyroid hormones have profound effects on body growth and development. By promoting protein synthesis in numerous tissues, including soft (muscle) and hard (bone), they ensure appropriate differentiation and growth. The most critical action in this regard is on the brain and nervous tissue (see below). Thyroid hormones act synergistically with growth hormone and may be necessary for the synthesis of GH in the pituitary.

Thyroid hormones affect heart and blood vessel functions, such as increasing heart rate and contractility and vascular responsiveness to catecholamines. These effects tend to increase blood pressure. Thyroid hormones also affect brain function and behaviour, possibly by enhancing the actions of catecholamines on the nervous tissue.

CONTROL OF THYROID. The synthesis and release of thyroid hormones are under the control of a pituitary hormone, thyrotropin (TSH). TSH not only promotes hormonal synthesis and secretion by the thyroid, but can lead to increased cell number (hyperplasia) and size (hypertrophy) of the gland. This condition is referred to as a goiter. The secretion of TSH is regulated by direct negative-feedback effects of circulating thyroxine on the pituitary as well as by the stimulating effect of TRH (thyrotropin-releasing hormone) from the hypothalamus. Increased plasma levels of thyroid hormones can act directly on the pituitary and diminish TSH release, and vice versa. The brain also exerts control on pituitary TSH by changing the rate of release of TRH, usually in response to environmental stresses such as heat and cold. A rise in TRH increases TSH levels, leading to greater secretion of thyroid hormones.

HISTOPHYSIOLOGY, SYNTHESIS, AND SECRETION. The thyroid gland is comprised of numerous follicles. Each follicle consists of a single row of follicular cells (thyroid epithelial cells) surrounding a cavity (lumen) filled with a colloidal substance, the colloid. The colloid is the storehouse of a special large protein, thyroglobulin, which is synthesized by thyroid cells and secreted into the lumen to participate in the synthesis of thyroid hormones. Blood capillaries run through the space between the thyroid follicles.

The iodide in the blood is pumped actively into thyroid cells and is then rapidly transported into the colloid. There, enzymes catalyze the oxidation of iodide into iodine. The iodine is attached to the tyrosine (amino acid) residues in the thyroglobulin. Further chemical reactions involving tyrosine residues result in synthesis of thyroxine and Tg. Pinocytotic vesicles on the apical cell surfaces (the colloid border) then reabsorb pieces of the colloid, containing the hormone, and bring them into the
thyroid cells, where they are united with lysosomes. The lysosomes help release the hormone from the protein. The free hormone diffuses to the basal surface of the thyroid cell and is secreted into the blood. In the blood, thyroid hormones bind with special blood proteins (thyroid binding-globulins, TBG), which carry them to the target tissues. There they are liberated, entering target cells to exert their actions.

HYPERTHYROIDISM AND HYPOTHYROIDISM. Excessive secretion of thyroid hormones (hyperthyroidism) is often associated with an autoimmune disease (Graves' disease), in which an antibody against TSH receptors on the thyroid cells is produced in the body, pathologically stimulating the thyroid cells. Hyperthyroid individuals have a high BMR (up to +100%). The enhanced heat production depletes energy reserves (liver glycogen and body fat) leading to wasting and thinness. These individuals are also irritable and nervous, and show increased cardiovascular and respiratory activities. Prolonged dryness and weight loss (exophthalmus) is one of the signs of hypothyroidism. Some individuals develop goiters. The follicular cells become enlarged, and the colloid appears depleted.

In infants and children, thyroid deficiency (hypothyroidism) results in the syndrome of cretinism. Cretins are dwarfed and mentally retarded due to growth deficiency in the brain. They have potbellies, small mandibles, large tongues, and short necks. Cretinism can be due to maternal iodine deficiency or congenital absence, or abnormalities, of thyroid.

Cretinism can be largely prevented (reversed) by thyroid hormone replacement therapy if the treatment is begun from birth or during the early neonatal period.

In adults, hypothyroidism results in the syndrome of myxedema. Myxedemic individuals have diminished BMR (down to -40%), thick skin and puffy face (edema), husky voice, and coarse hair. They are slow in physical and mental activities and may exhibit deranged mental behavior. Besides disorders of the thyroid, pituitary or hypothalamic failures may also be responsible for hypothyroidism.