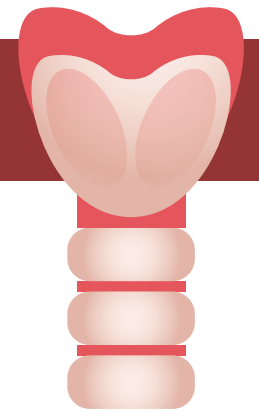


Hypothyroidism



What is it?

Hypothyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland produces insufficient hormones, which slows down the chemical reactions in the body, causing mental and physical changes.

Signs and symptoms



Swelling in the throat (goitre) which may present with a feeling of constriction in the neck



Dry, coarse hair with hair loss



Husky voice



Decreased sweating



Sluggishness



People with mild hypothyroidism may have no symptoms.



Fatigue



Slow growth in children and infants



Swelling of face and limbs



Concentration and memory loss



Slow speech



High cholesterol



Premature greying of hair



High blood pressure



Thick, dry skin



Irregular menstrual periods, infertility



Premature greying of hair



Slowed heart rate



Brittle nails



Weakness



Moderate weight gain (3-4kg)



Causes

- ▶ **Hashimoto's disease:** A disorder of the immune system – thyroid gland becomes large and inflamed, but later small and hard – normally in adolescents.
- ▶ Surgical removal of the **thyroid gland**.
- ▶ **Congenital hypothyroidism** – infants born without thyroid glands or with underactive thyroid glands.
- ▶ **Primary hypothyroidism** – inadequate production of thyroid hormones.
- ▶ **Medications** such as:
 - NeoMercazole (used to treat overactive thyroid)
 - Lithium carbonate (drugs to treat mental condition)
 - Amiodarone (used to treat abnormal heart rhythms)
- ▶ **Radiation treatment** for an overactive thyroid, or cancer can **destroy or shrink the gland**.
- ▶ **Thyroiditis** (inflammation of the thyroid gland) after a viral illness – only temporarily.
- ▶ **Iodine deficiency** in the diet, or an excess of iodine from foods such as seaweed.



Medication

- Tablets used to treat hypothyroidism can restore the thyroid hormone levels in the blood.
- Dosage levels are adjusted until the thyroid levels normalise.
- Once the correct dosage is found, patients usually feel well and free of symptoms.
- It's imperative to comply with your doctor's instructions regarding dosages, follow-up blood tests and visits (normally every 6 months).
- The stabilising of the hormone levels will also shrink goitres in the majority of cases.
- In a small number of patients' surgery it may be necessary to remove goitres.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

