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***What You Need  
to Know About  
Thyroid Disorders***

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## Thyroid Disorder Symptoms

Are you or someone you love experiencing any of the following:

- Fatigue
- Sluggishness
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Pale, dry skin
- A puffy face
- Hoarse voice
- An elevated blood cholesterol level
- Unexplained weight gain, or difficulty losing weight
- Muscle aches, tenderness and stiffness
- Pain, stiffness or swelling in your joints
- Muscle weakness
- Heavier than normal menstrual periods
- Brittle fingernails and hair
- Depression

If so, you may have a thyroid disorder ... even if you've had your symptoms dismissed and been told that you don't have it!

The sad truth is, it is still very common in modern medicine for a low-functioning thyroid to be completely missed. This is caused due to symptom confusion, inadequate testing and/or a general lack of understanding of the complexities of thyroid function.

### **Let's Take a Closer Look at Common Thyroid Problems & Their Causes**

The thyroid itself is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the lower part of the neck.

The primary function of the thyroid is to control metabolism, which it does by producing T4 and T3 hormones that regulate how much energy the body's cells use.

A thyroid that is working properly will maintain the right amount of hormones needed to keep the body's metabolism functioning at a satisfactory rate.



However, problems sometimes occur and the most common thyroid disorders involve the abnormal production of thyroid hormones.

For example, if your thyroid is producing too much hormones that's called hyperthyroidism and if your thyroid is producing an insufficient amount of hormones that's called hypothyroidism.

Other thyroid disorders include goiter and cancer.

It should be noted here that cancer of the thyroid gland is rare and occurs in less than 10% of thyroid nodules.

The symptoms I listed at the beginning of this paper all relate to hypothyroidism which is by far the most common type of thyroid disorder among adults.

Symptoms of hyperthyroidism include:

- Jitteriness
- Shaking
- Increased nervousness
- Irritability
- Rapid heartbeat or palpitations
- Feeling hot
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- More frequent bowel movements
- Shorter or lighter menstrual periods

### **Common Causes of Thyroid Disorders**

Common causes of hyperthyroidism include Graves' Disease, toxic adenomas, subacute thyroiditis and pituitary gland malfunctions or cancerous growths in the thyroid gland.

On the other hand, common causes of hypothyroidism include: Hashimoto's thyroiditis, which is an immune disorder where the body attacks thyroid tissue; removal of the thyroid gland; excessive exposure to iodide; and use of some drugs like Lithium or Amiodarone.



## **So Who Typically Gets Thyroid Disorders?**

According to the most recent statistics, approximately 20 million Americans currently have some form of thyroid disorder.

People of all ages and races can get a thyroid disorder. However, Thyroid disorders affect eight times as many women as men.

Thyroid disorders can also happen at any time in life, but they get more common with age and are especially common after pregnancy or menopause.

## **What to Do if You Think You Have a Thyroid Disorder**

If you think you have a thyroid disorder, the first step would be to contact your doctor immediately so that you can undergo testing and if you do have a thyroid disorder a treatment plan can be created.

As mentioned earlier, thyroid disorders can be difficult to diagnose because symptoms can be easily confused with other conditions.

However, there is a test now called the Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) that can identify thyroid disorders even before symptoms begin to appear.

Be sure to ask your doctor about this test.