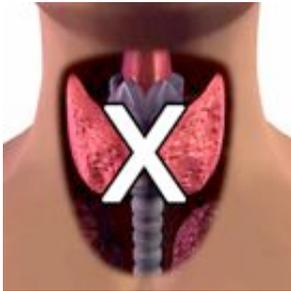


Hypothyroidism



Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid gland does not make enough of the hormone thyroxine (a chemical).

It is often called an **underactive thyroid**.



It can make your body functions slow down.



What are the symptoms of Hypothyroidism?



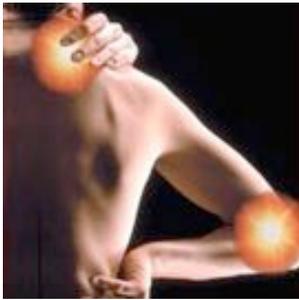
- Tiredness



- Putting on weight



- Feeling constipated (when it is hard to poo)



- Feeling achy



- Feeling cold



- Dry skin



- Lifeless hair



- Fluid retention (when your body is holding too much fluid/water)



- Thinking more slowly



- Depression



Some people may have:

- A rough voice



- Irregular or heavy periods



- Difficulty getting pregnant



- Loss of sex drive



- Pains and numbness in the hands



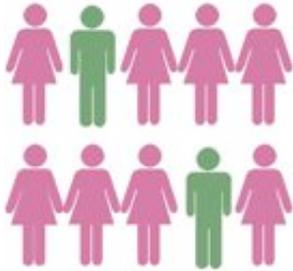
All these symptoms can be caused by other health problems.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

Who gets Hypothyroidism?



Lots of people develop Hypothyroidism at some time in their life.

It is more common in adult women.



1 in 3 people with Down's syndrome develop Hypothyroidism before the age of 25 years.



Some doctors suggest that people with Down's Syndrome should have an annual blood test to check for Hypothyroidism.



A blood test can find out if you have Hypothyroidism.

It tests the amount of hormones called TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone) and T4 (thyroxine).



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How is Hypothyroidism treated?



The treatment is to take thyroxine tablet(s) each day.



The blood test will be repeated every 2-3 months to make sure you are taking the right amount for your body.



This treatment is usually for life.



If you have Hypothyroidism, your medicine will be free.



It is important that the doctor knows what other medicines or treatments you are taking as this may stop the tablet working properly.



Most people feel much better soon after starting treatment.



It is best to take the tablet on an empty stomach (before breakfast).



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Are there any side-effects or problems from treatment?



Usually not.



However, if you have angina (bad chest pains), you may find that your angina pains become worse when you first start your treatment.



Tell a doctor if this happens.



If you take too much of the medicine you can get:



- Palpitations (when it feels like your heart is beating in a strange way)



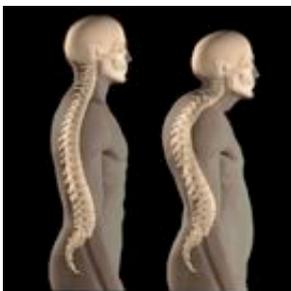
- Diarrhoea



- Grumpy



- Sweaty



- Weak bones



This is why it is important to check the amount of medicine is right for you by having the blood test every few months.



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If Hypothyroidism is not treated...



You may have a higher chance of getting heart disease.



If you are pregnant, you are more likely to have difficulties during your pregnancy.

For example: pre-eclampsia, anaemia, premature labour, low birth weight, stillbirth, and serious bleeding after the birth.



Hypothyroid coma - but this is very rare.



However, with treatment, symptoms usually go.



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Organisations to contact:



British Thyroid Foundation

PO Box 97, Clifford, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 6XD

Tel: 01423 709 707 and 01423 709 448

Web: www.btf-thyroid.org



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