

Terry Talks Nutrition



Are You Hypothyroid?

irregular heartbeat, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, muscle dysfunction, gastrointestinal disturbances, mental confusion, severe depression, decreased libido, and extreme fatigue. The thyroid very definitely affects how you feel and how you relate to life in general.

Testing Thyroid Hormone Levels

Many doctors rely completely on a blood test that is grossly inaccurate and overlooks a majority of low thyroid function diagnoses. This is the TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone) test. The pituitary gland releases TSH to signal the thyroid gland to produce thyroid hormones. If TSH levels are very high it is an indicator that the thyroid gland is not releasing enough hormones. However, this test doesn't measure the actual levels of T4 and T3. Testing only for T4 levels, and finding they are "normal" may not reveal problems with a low conversion rate of T4 to T3. Therefore, it is important to test TSH plus T4 and T3 levels in order to get a true picture of what is happening with thyroid hormones.

The other problem with thyroid hormone testing is the range that is considered "normal." Some people may have multiple symptoms of thyroid dysfunction, but because the results are within what is considered normal for most people, no treatment is initiated.

A test initiated by Dr. Broda Barnes, considered to be one of the premier experts on thyroid, is a far better test with the added convenience of being able to perform it at home. The procedure, which measures basal body temperature (BBT) is as follows:

- Take a non-digital (glass) thermometer and place it on your bedside table
- In the morning upon waking, without getting out of bed, place the thermometer in your armpit and hold arm close to body for 10 minutes
- Read temperature and record (since temperature rises with ovulation and stays higher until menses occurs, pre-menopausal women should only monitor their temperature during the first 7 days following the end of their period to get a true reading)
- Repeat procedure each day for at least three days, preferably 10 days

A normal BBT is between 97.8 and 98.2

degrees Fahrenheit. Anything consistently under 97.8 indicates thyroid dysfunction.

Drug Treatment Protocol

When physicians diagnose hypothyroidism they usually prescribe levothyroxine (Synthroid, Levoxyl, Levothroid), a synthetic drug which mimics the thyroid hormone T4. It is their contention that if the body has enough T4 it will manufacture T3 in adequate proportion, a fact that is not true. They also have a negative attitude toward natural thyroid extract (Armour®) because they believe it is not stable and gives unreliable results. Natural whole thyroid is derived from dehydrated porcine (pork) thyroid and contains all the thyroid hormones including T3 and T4. Many holistic doctors prefer this form of thyroid (Armour® thyroid) supplementation. It does require a prescription because it is classified as a prescription drug. However, I feel it is the thyroid hormone supplement that is most compatible with your body's metabolic function. I recommend that you find a physician that will prescribe it for you. You will find it worth the search.

Iodine

Iodine is to the thyroid what calcium is to the bone. It is very common that a deficiency of iodine can cause hypothyroidism. It is estimated that over 300 million people worldwide have chronic goiters (swollen thyroid glands) because they consume very little iodine. The swelling is caused by the action of thyroid stimulating hormone released by the pituitary. The TSH stimu-

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Key Words



thyroid, hypothyroid, low thyroid, iodine, l-tyrosine

One of the questions I'm most commonly asked is how to know when it is the thyroid gland, and not something else, that is causing a person to feel less than their best. Below is a list of common symptoms of thyroid problems. If you answer "yes" to three or more please keep reading to learn more about treating low thyroid (hypothyroid) hormone levels and how you can keep your thyroid gland functioning at its peak.

- Aching muscles?
- Are you always fatigued or exhausted?
- Are you irritable or impatient?
- Are your hands and feet usually cold?
- Do you often feel depressed or anxious?
- Is your hair coarse, dry, and lifeless?
- Is your skin dry?
- Loss of libido?
- Gaining weight easily without eating more?
- Do you have insomnia?
- Slow heartbeat?
- Are you losing your enthusiasm for life?
- Are you listless, forgetful and anti-social?

Function of the Thyroid Gland

The thyroid is a butterfly shaped gland which lies at the base of the throat. It secretes hormones which control how your body uses energy, makes protein, regulates body temperature, and other vital functions. Thyroxine (T4) is the primary hormone secreted by the thyroid, which is converted into active triiodothyronine (T3) as needed to control the body's metabolic rate. If the body produces too little T4, many of its normal chemical processes slow down, a condition known as hypothyroidism (low thyroid). This imbalance of thyroid hormones can produce skin disorders,

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lates the thyroid, but without iodine the thyroid is unable to create T4. The TSH continues to stimulate the thyroid which then swells, causing the goiter. Sufficient iodine intake prevents goiter formation by allowing the thyroid to respond properly to TSH and release thyroid hormones.

The Controversy over Iodine

Now let's discuss the controversial part of iodine therapy. In medical schools in the mid 1900's, iodine was literally considered a magic medicine. The Nobel Laureate, Dr. Albert Szent Gyorgi, the physician who discovered vitamin C writes, *"When I was a medical student, iodine in the form of KI (potassium iodide) was the universal medicine. Nobody knew what it did but it did something and did something good. We students used to sum up the situation in this little rhyme, if ye don't know where, what and why, prescribe ye then K&I."* It was always used for infections and for pneumonia and bronchitis. Lack of it was considered to be the cause of mental slowness. Even today, iodine deficiency is considered to be the most common cause of preventable brain damage in the world. But in the 1940's, a single paper written by two researchers completely changed the way we use iodine. This poorly documented paper gave the impression that iodine use was not only archaic but not necessary and could even be dangerous, citing hyperthyroidism (excessive thyroid hormones) as a side effect. Almost overnight the use of iodine in medicine was stopped and in its place we have a fear of one of the most important and critical nutrients in our diet. Iodine costs just pennies a day. With the advent of modern drugs in the 1940's and 1950's could the profits realized by the drug companies have a bearing on discrediting the use of iodine for hypothyroidism?

Iodine Plus L-Tyrosine = Thyroid Hormones

Not only do we need levels of iodine far greater than scientists previously thought,

but without the important amino acid, tyrosine, there would be no thyroid hormone function. It is absolutely necessary for the body to produce thyroid (as well as noradrenaline and dopamine) hormones. Tyrosine also is an excellent stress reliever and an excellent natural treatment for depression. Together, intake of iodine and L-tyrosine can keep the thyroid nourished and prevent goiter, hypothyroidism, and a multitude of symptoms associated with low thyroid hormone levels.

Additional Recommendations

If you have been suffering from any chronic illness and no one seems to have an answer, I believe the following recommendations can improve your existing condition 50% to 100%:

- Start today by adding a natural thyroid support formula to your supplement regimen
- Take 1, 10 grain betaine hydrochloric acid (HCl) capsule after each meal. If you feel a warming sensation in your stomach it's possible that you don't need the HCl or just take it at your main meal
- Avoid all dairy and gluten products

I truly believe everyone can benefit significantly from using an iodine/L-tyrosine complex. Your whole life and personality will change once you begin this therapy. You will see changes within several weeks, but be patient - **to fully restore the thyroid and its metabolic function may take 3-6 months for many people.** Remember, you may have been low thyroid all your life. If your mother had low thyroid, more than likely you have had low thyroid since birth, so be patient. Rome was not built in a day.

Look For This Formula at Your Local Health Food Store:

Iodine (from Kelp and Potassium Iodide)	30 mg	20,000*
L-Tyrosine	400 mg	**

NOTE: HCl (stomach acid) is required to utilize thyroid medications. If you are taking any form of antacid you are essentially reducing stomach acid which is **required** to absorb thyroxine (T4). These drugs can either neutralize stomach acid (Tums®, Rolaids®, etc) or reduce or stop the stomach's production of acid altogether (Pepcid®

AC, Tagamet®, Prilosec OTC®, etc). If you are taking these medications, first fix your digestive system with the use of hydrochloric acid and digestive enzymes. I have found that many people who use acid neutralizers or acid blockers because they think they have too much stomach acid, in reality require supplementation with hydrochloric acid. I strongly recommend avoiding taking drugs to make your stomach less acidic. See my article **"Your Antacids are Killing You"** for more information.

Additionally, a high percentage of the population is intolerant to dairy and gluten-containing grains. I have seen some amazing results when people abstain from dairy and gluten products. Dairy contains casein and grains contain gluten. Both are proteins that are extremely difficult for the majority of us to digest. However, be diligent when abstaining from dairy and gluten because just one meal or a snack containing either one can have lingering effects that may last up to six weeks.

From the Book by Dr. David Brownstein, M.D.

IODINE

Why You Need It

Why You Can't Live Without It 3rd edition

"It still astounds me how much misinformation there is about iodine. This occurs with physicians and lay people alike. The 'wives tale' that we get enough iodine in iodized salt has been parroted for over 50 years. This 'wives tale' is false. The research is clear, iodized salt is a poor source of iodide as it is not bioavailable for the body.

Iodine deficiency is widespread. Conventional medicine has failed to understand this fact. However, with increased research, the truth will come out. It has to. There is no alternative physiology or alternative biochemistry. Science does not lie. Iodine deficiency does occur in today's world and it is occurring at very high levels.

Correcting iodine deficiency has proven to have many positive health benefits. Ensuring adequate iodine levels helps prevent and treat autoimmune illnesses, thyroid disorders, cancer and other conditions. This book will educate the reader on the benefits of the remarkable nutrient iodine."

For more information on Dr. David Brownstein's work go to www.drbrownstein.com

When in doubt, always consult your physician or health care practitioner. This column is to provide you with information to maintain your health.