



Feeling Sluggish?

What to Know About Your Thyroid

2026 EDITION



Functions of the Thyroid Gland

- Regulates metabolism¹
- Influences other hormone systems in the body¹
- Influences many body processes, including heart rate, breathing, digestion, and body temperature¹
- Influences normal growth and development²



Signs of an Underactive Thyroid (Hypothyroidism)

- Modest weight gain^{1,3}
- Tiredness and fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dry skin and hair
- Hair loss
- Depression
- Sensitivity to cold temperature
- Heavy or irregular periods¹
- Constipation
- Joint and muscle pain

These signs have many causes. Only a blood test can tell.³



Signs of an Overactive Thyroid (Hyperthyroidism)

- Anxiety
- Irritability or moodiness
- Nervousness and hyperactivity
- Sweating or sensitivity to high temperatures
- Hand trembling
- Hair loss⁴
- Missed or light menstrual periods⁴
- Fast or irregular heartbeat^{4,5}
- Weight loss despite a good appetite^{4,5}
- Trouble sleeping^{4,5}

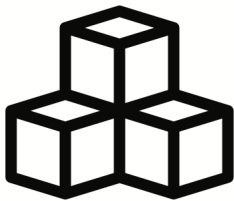
These signs have many causes. Only a blood test can tell.³



3 Essential Nutrients for the Thyroid Gland

Your thyroid produces two primary hormones, Thyroxine (T4) and Triiodothyronine (T3). It produces mainly T4, which is then converted to T3 in the body. T3 is the active hormone that influences many body processes, including the regulation of metabolism. Several nutrients are necessary for the production of these hormones as well as the conversion of T4 to T3.^{6,7}

Most people in the US get enough of these from food. Supplements help only if you're low, and more is not better.^{2,7}



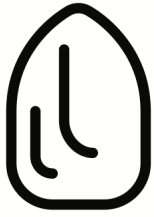
iodine

About 70 to 80% of your body's iodine is stored in the thyroid gland.² Iodine deficiency still causes hypothyroidism where diets lack it, but in the US the usual cause is Hashimoto's.^{1,3,6} Iodine is a necessary component of T3 and T4, but because our bodies do not synthesize it, it's important to make sure to get it through diet.²

Sources: iodized salt, dairy products, cod and other seafood, eggs, seaweed (in small amounts)²

PHARMACIST'S NOTE Too much iodine, especially from kelp or seaweed supplements, can cause or worsen thyroid problems. The adult upper limit is 1,100 mcg a day, and people with Hashimoto's can react at lower amounts.^{1,2}

PHARMACIST'S NOTE Needs rise in pregnancy (220 mcg) and breastfeeding (290 mcg). The American Thyroid Association (ATA) recommends a prenatal vitamin with 150 mcg of iodine.^{2,8}

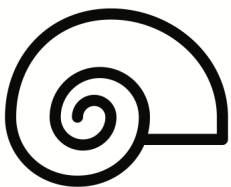


selenium

The proper balance of thyroid hormones depends on adequate selenium, which is involved in the process of converting T4 to T3.⁷ Selenium also helps shield the thyroid from the hydrogen peroxide it makes.⁷ Low selenium is linked to more thyroid disease in women; supplement trials are mixed.^{7,9}

Sources: Brazil nuts, tuna, halibut, sardines, eggs⁷

PHARMACIST'S NOTE One Brazil nut can cover your day, and a handful can be too much. The upper limit is 400 mcg a day. Too much causes hair loss and brittle nails. The ATA advises against selenium supplements in pregnant women with thyroid antibodies.^{7,8}



zinc

Zinc also helps your body make and activate thyroid hormones, and low zinc can lower their levels.¹⁰

Sources: oysters and other shellfish, beef, pumpkin seeds, legumes, whole grains¹¹

PHARMACIST'S NOTE The upper limit is 40 mg a day. Long-term excess can cause copper deficiency.¹¹

IF YOU TAKE LEVOTHYROXINE If you take thyroid medicine, take it on an empty stomach 30 to 60 minutes before breakfast. Keep calcium, iron and multivitamins with minerals at least 4 hours away.¹²

When to See Your Doctor

If you have felt off for more than a few weeks, whether tired, cold and foggy or shaky, sweaty and wired, don't guess. Ask your doctor for a thyroid blood test. The first test is usually TSH, the signal your brain sends to your thyroid. A high TSH points to an underactive thyroid, and a low TSH to an overactive one.^{4,13} Free T4 shows how much hormone your body can actually use. If your results are off, ask whether thyroid antibody tests make sense. They can show an autoimmune cause, such as Hashimoto's or Graves' disease.^{3,4,13}

Go sooner if you notice a lump or swelling in your neck, a racing or irregular heartbeat, or weight changes you can't explain, or if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy, or have recently had a baby.^{5,8} And if you take biotin, stop it at least two days before your blood draw, because it can make thyroid results look wrong.¹⁴

Where to Go from Here

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Stop guessing, start knowing: an 80-marker blood panel read by a real practitioner, with a plan built around your results.

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This guide is for education and is not medical advice. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease, and it is not a substitute for prescribed medication. If you take prescriptions, talk with your clinician before adding a supplement.

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Lindsey Elmore is a pharmacist, educator, author, international speaker, and host of The Lindsey Elmore Show. For more than fifteen years she has helped people understand their health and make more informed decisions, and her work has taken her onto stages around the world and into hundreds of long-form conversations with physicians, researchers, and authors. She teaches on health, science, faith, and what changes a life.

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