

Dietary Instructions for Hypothyroidism



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What is the thyroid gland?

It is an endocrine gland located at front of the neck; it produces certain hormones that are important for growth, repair and metabolism.

What is hypothyroidism?

It is a condition in which the thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormones





Causes and Risk factors of hypothyroidism:

- Autoimmune diseases and the most common is Hashimoto's thyroiditis
- Congenital disease and family history of thyroid disease
- Inability of pituitary gland to produce enough thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH)
- Iodine deficiency
- Pregnancy
- Thyroid surgery
- Some medications
- Radiation therapy especially in the head and neck.
- Age (more than 60 years old)
- Sex (The majority of cases occur in women).

Signs / Symptoms of Hypothyroidism may include:

- Weight gain (slower metabolism)
- Enlarged thyroid gland (goiter)
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Fatigue
- Dry skin
- Constipation

Untreated hypothyroidism can lead to several health problems, such as:

1. Abnormal weight gain Most people with hypothyroidism tend to experience abnormal weight gain and difficulty losing weight until hormone levels stabilize.	
2. Heart problems Patients with hypothyroidism have a greater risk of heart diseases and heart failure.	
3. Low levels of thyroid hormones lead to a higher blood lipid profile and increased blood pressure.	
4. Impaired glucose metabolism. Hypothyroidism affects carbohydrate metabolism and have profound effect on glucose control.	

Nutritional tips:

1. Consume food that contains certain nutrients like iodine, selenium and zinc. These nutrients can help maintain proper thyroid function.

The following table guides you to find the food sources of these nutrients.

Iodine	Selenium	Zinc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy products (Laban, yoghurt, milk). • Iodized salt • Saltwater fish • Seaweed • Whole eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil nuts • Tuna • Shrimp • Beef • Turkey • Chicken • Eggs • Oatmeal • Whole wheat Bread • Dairy products (Laban, yoghurt, milk). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oysters • Beef • Crab • Fortified cereal with zinc • Chicken • Legumes • Pumpkin seeds • Dairy products (Laban, yoghurt, milk).

2. Control the intake of food sources that contain goitrogens and soy.

People with hypothyroidism can still enjoy these foods but in moderation. Also, the cooking process appears to deactivate the goitrogen's effects.

Foods that contain goitrogens include:

- Collards
- Brussels sprouts
- Russian kale
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Cabbage
- Radish
- Turnips
- Cassava
- Mustard seeds

Foods that contain soy include soybeans and soy beans products such as:

- Soy milk
- Soy sauce
- Tofu
- Miso



3. Follow a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet:

- Distribute your food into 3 main meals and 2-3 snacks in between.
- Include fiber rich foods in your diet e.g. (fruits, vegetables, and whole grain breads and cereals), they provide satiety and are good sources of vitamins and minerals.
- Cut down intake of unhealthy and high calories foods like:
 - Processed food such as processed meat ...
 - Fast food, pastry, pies and sambousa .
 - Fatty meat, poultry skin.
 - Fried food.
 - All sweet (donuts, cakes, cookies...), sugar, jam.
 - Soft drinks and sweet juices.
- Consume the recommended amount and avoid overconsumption of starchy foods
- Take skimmed or low fat milk and their products, 2-3 cups daily
- Follow the healthy ways in food preparation such as grilling, boiling, steaming, and baking.
- Reading the food label helps in selection of suitable food items and less calorie contents.
- Drink 8-12 cups of water throughout the day
- Enjoy your favorite exercise, 20-30 minutes daily.

Important notes:

Certain foods and supplements can make hypothyroid medication (Thyroid hormones) less effective, so patients must consider the timing when taking both:

- Calcium, iron supplements and Chromium polynicotinate (used for blood sugar control and weight loss) should be taken at least four hours apart from thyroid hormones.
- High-fiber foods such as (bran flakes, fiber bars) and drinks such as (Coffee and tea) should be taken at least one hour apart from thyroid hormones.

