

6 Different Ways To Lose Weight With A Thyroid Problem



The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of your neck just below the Adam's apple. It is part of an intricate network of glands called the endocrine system, which is responsible for coordinating many of your body's activities. The thyroid's main job is regulating your body's metabolism.

The thyroid gland is about two inches long and has two sides called lobes that lie on either side of your windpipe, usually connected by a strip of thyroid tissue known as an isthmus. Although it is a small part of your body, it is an important one.

Why is Your Thyroid Important?

The thyroid is made up of glands that produce, store, and release hormones into the bloodstream so that they could reach the body's cells. The thyroid gland takes the iodine from the food you eat to make two main hormones: Triiodothyronine (T3) and Thyroxine (T4).

It is important that your T3 and T4 levels are not too high or too low, and you have the hypothalamus and pituitary in your brain to thank for communicating with each other to maintain that balance.

T3 and T4 travel to almost every cell in your body, and they regulate the speed with which the cells and your metabolism work. For example, they regulate your heart rate and how fast your intestines process food. If your T3 and T4 levels are low, your heart rate may be slower than normal, causing constipation or weight gain. If your levels are high, you may have a faster heart rate, causing diarrhea or weight loss.

Like mentioned earlier, the thyroid plays an important role in coordinating many of your body's functions, including, but not limited to:

- Breathing
- Heart rate
- Central and peripheral nervous systems
- Body weight
- Cholesterol levels
- Menstrual cycles
- Body temperature

So when problems with your thyroid occur, your body gets out of funk in one or many ways.

Types of Thyroid Problems

There are two main categories that thyroid problems fall under: hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

What is Hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism occurs when you have too much T3 and T4 in your body, and this condition can happen in several ways.

- Graves' disease - the production of too much thyroid hormone, and is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism, affecting about 70 percent of people with an overactive thyroid (1 in 200 people in the U.S.). The

disease is hereditary and can develop at any age in men or women, but more common in women between ages 20-30.

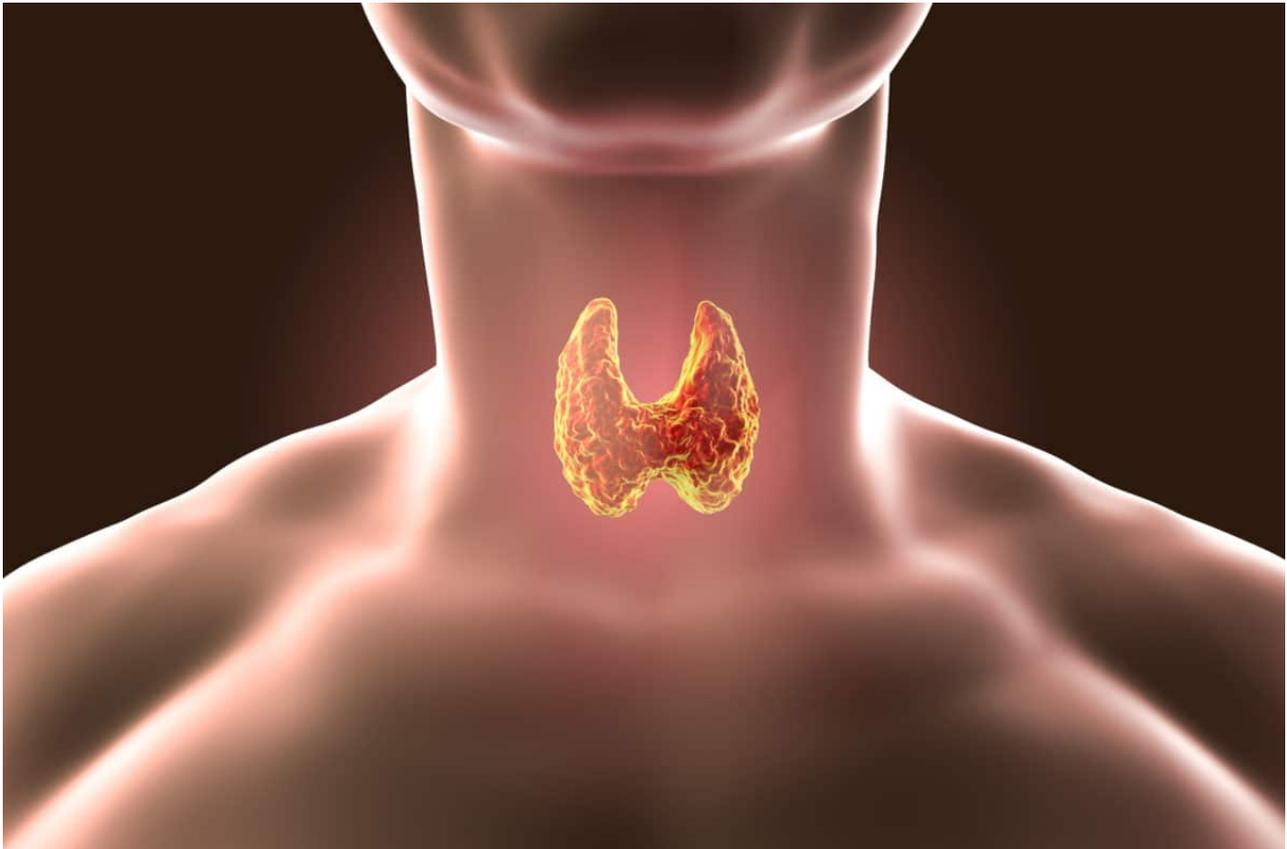
- Toxic adenomas - when nodules develop in the thyroid gland and begin to secrete thyroid hormones, which upsets the body's chemical balance.
- Subacute thyroiditis - inflammation of the thyroid that causes the gland to leak excess hormones, causing a temporary hyperthyroidism that usually lasts a few weeks, but may persist for months.
- Pituitary gland malfunctions or cancerous growths in the thyroid gland - although rare, hyperthyroidism can develop from these causes

Symptoms of Hyperthyroidism

Excessive thyroid hormone production can lead to symptoms like:

- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Racing heart
- Trouble sleeping
- Thin skin
- Brittle hair and nails

You may also experience shaking, increased sweating, irritability, and nervousness.



What is Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism occurs when you have too little T3 and T4 in your body, and since your body's energy production requires certain amounts of thyroid hormones, a drop in hormone production leads to lower energy levels. Some causes are:

- Hashimoto's thyroiditis - this is an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks thyroid tissue, which eventually dies and stops producing hormones. It is known as chronic lymphocytic thyroiditis, and is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the United States. It affects about 14 million Americans.
- Removal of the thyroid gland - the thyroid may have been surgically removed or chemically destroyed, both ways meaning there does not exist a thyroid gland to perform the functions it is supposed to.
- Exposure to too much iodide - you might be exposed to an excessive amount of iodide from cold and sinus medicines, the heart medicine amiodarone, or some contrast dyes given before some x-rays.
- Exposure to lithium - this drug has been seen to be a cause of hypothyroidism

When untreated for long periods of time, hypothyroidism can bring on a myxedema coma, a rare but potentially fatal condition that requires immediate hormone treatment.

Symptoms of Hypothyroidism

Too little thyroid hormone production can lead to symptoms like:

- Dry skin
- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Memory problems
- Depression
- Weakness
- Coma

You may also experience an increased sensitivity to cold, slow heart rate, and weight gain.

How to Lose Weight With a Thyroid Problem?

You have read about the symptoms an irregular thyroid can cause, from dry skin and constipation to depression and memory problems. One thing people with thyroid problems struggle with a lot is their weight. As if losing weight isn't hard enough, having thyroid problems will make it feel impossible. But here are some things to consider when you want to lose weight with a thyroid problem.

Change your diet

Most people don't eat the healthiest or best foods, but luckily, our diet is something we can control, so try starting with that. The type of diet, however, depends on your physiology, ability to absorb certain nutrients, food sensitivities, and how effective your body is at metabolizing, storing, and burning carbohydrates. Some things to consider include:

- Overall calorie restriction
- Avoid eating too much of thyroid-slowng, raw goitrogenic foods and vegetables like kale, spinach, and broccoli
- Eliminate gluten and wheat by following a gluten-free diet
- Limiting simple carbohydrates and sugar by following a low-glycemic diet
- Follow an anti-inflammatory diet such as the autoimmune protocol/anti-inflammatory/AIP diet
- Eat unprocessed, low-sugar, whole foods
- Try the ketogenic diet that involves low-carbohydrate foods

You could also change the timing of your meals (i.e. intermittent fasting) and test for any food allergies and eliminating those foods from your diet.

Get enough water and fiber

You were probably taught that you should drink eight cups of water a day, but some experts suggest that you drink another 8 ounces for every 25 pounds of weight you need to lose. Water helps your metabolism work more efficiently, reduces appetite, eliminates water retention and bloating, and improves digestion.

Fiber might also be one thing you're not getting enough of. It has a ton of benefits even for someone who doesn't have thyroid problems. For those trying to lose weight, fiber can help you feel fuller, longer. Some foods high in fiber include:

- Lentils
- Split peas
- Chia seeds
- Black beans
- Oats
- Brown rice

Get enough sleep

Insomnia tends to be a common symptom for those with a thyroid imbalance. Falling asleep can be hard, but there are ways to help train the brain by

creating sleep hygiene by doing these things:

- Don't use digital devices like your computer, phone, iPad, or watch TV right before bed
- Keep your room dimly lit, cool, and a place for relaxation
- Try a magnesium supplement to help promote muscle relaxation, as thyroid problems can lead to magnesium deficiency

Understand your medicine

Some of the drugs doctors prescribe for your thyroid problems can cause weight gain, which is why knowing what you're taking can be helpful when trying to lose weight. Here are just a few examples of medication associated with weight gain:

- Beta-blockers
- Steroid anti-inflammatories
- Certain antidepressants (Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft)
- Antithyroid drugs like methimazole

If you're taking any of these medications, talk to your doctor about your concerns with weight gain/loss.

Try metabolism-boosting exercises

For many patients with thyroid problems, drastically lowering calorie intake or a diet might not be enough for losing weight. Hypothyroidism can lower your metabolism, making it harder to lose weight, therefore making exercise a great way to raise your metabolism. Exercise makes your metabolism more efficient by helping burn calories and fat, reducing blood sugar levels, and balancing weight-loss promoting hormones like leptin.

People typically need 60 minutes of exercise per day to maintain and avoid weight gain. For someone with thyroid problems, you will most likely need more than that. Try pilates, walking, lifting weights, and talk to a trainer about strength training to build muscles.

Resolve your insulin resistance

When suffering from hypothyroidism, everything in your system slows down right to your cells. Your body's ability to process carbs slows down, as well as its ability to absorb blood sugar.

Today's low-fat diets include more and more high-glycemic carbohydrates like white flour baked goods, pasta, pizza, rice, potatoes, cereals, corn, desserts, and sugary products. Take a first step in avoiding these foods for your recovery.

People with insulin resistance feel tired most of the day and especially after meals, they are hungry all the time, have sweet cravings, which usually are not relieved after eating sweets, and might feel thirsty all the time.

Resolving insulin resistance needs a customized program. This involves the right diet, the right type of exercise, and specific nutrients like berberine, chromium, magnesium, etc.

Let us know what you do to lose weight with a thyroid problem.