YOUR THYROID
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The thyroid makes hormones that travel through your bloodstream and regulate how your body breaks down food and uses it for energy. It is part of the endocrine system, which includes the pituitary gland, hypothalamus, thymus, pineal gland, testes, ovaries, adrenal glands, parathyroid and pancreas.

Visit hormone.org for more information.

ABOUT YOUR THYROID

The thyroid
secretes hormones that help regulate:

- brain development and function
- eyes
- heart
- skin and hair
- weight/metabolism
- intestine function

The thyroid is a
butterfly shaped gland
at the front of the neck.

The thyroid is governed
by the pituitary (called
the “master gland”), a
pea-sized organ
located at the base
of the brain.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Pituitary gland checks amount of thyroid hormone in blood
2. Pituitary tells thyroid to make more or less hormone so there's always a balanced amount

Thyroid disorders occur when something goes wrong with the process, and too much or too little thyroid hormone is produced

HYPERTHYROIDISM = OVERACTIVE

- Increased bowel movements
- Increased sweating
- Weight loss
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Vision problems
- Irregular mensturation (light)
- Anxiety/nervousness

HYPOTHYROIDISM = UNDERACTIVE

- Constipation
- Intolerance to cold
- Weight gain
- Dry skin, dry hair
- Irregular mensturation (heavy)
- Fatigue

NORMAL THYROID FUNCTION

- Take your prescribed medication as directed
- Be aware of drug interactions
- Have your healthcare provider check for nodules
- Eat a balanced diet
- Get enough sleep and exercise

THYROID DISORDERS:

occur when thyroid releases too many (overactive) or too few (underactive) hormones. These disorders frequently run in families, and are more common in women.

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NODULES

- Lump or swelling in thyroid gland
- No effect on thyroid function, usually no effect on thyroid hormones
- More than 90% are not harmful or dangerous, but some can be cancerous
- Nodules can be detected by a “neck check” by your healthcare provider

THYROID CANCER

- Most common endocrine cancer
- Occurs in all ages, children through seniors
- No symptoms in early stage
- About two out of every three people diagnosed are between ages 20 and 55

IF YOU HAVE A THYROID DISORDER:

Estimated new cases of thyroid cancer in 2014:

- 47,790
- 15,190

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