

## Thyroid

The **thyroid gland** is a small and delicate butterfly-shaped gland, within the endocrine system, that sits low on the front of the neck. It has two side lobes, connected by a bridge (isthmus) in the middle. The thyroid secretes several hormones, collectively called thyroid hormones. The main hormone is thyroxine, also called T<sub>4</sub> (the 4 denotes the amount of iodine molecules it has). Thyroid hormones affect nearly every cell in your body. They help control growth, repair and metabolism (the process where your body converts what you eat into energy). Your metabolism affects your temperature and how fast you burn calories. When the thyroid gland receives a signal, called TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone), it releases thyroid hormones into the bloodstream. This signal is sent from the pituitary gland, a small gland at the base of your brain, when thyroid hormone levels are low.

Occasionally, the thyroid gland does not release thyroid hormones, even when there is plenty of TSH. This is called primary hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) and is the most common type of hypothyroidism. Those with hypothyroidism often feel cold, fatigued and may gain weight easily. When living with a partial thyroid or without a thyroid, the symptoms of hypothyroidism are the same.

Approximately 90% of primary hypothyroidism is caused by Hashimoto's thyroiditis (also known as chronic lymphocytic thyroiditis), an autoimmune disease where your immune system mistakenly attacks your thyroid gland. Other causes of primary hypothyroidism are an iodine deficiency, a genetic disorder, taking certain medications, or surgery that removes part or the entire thyroid.

Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid) occurs when your thyroid gland produces too much of the hormone thyroxine. Hyperthyroidism can accelerate your body's metabolism, causing unintentional weight loss and a rapid or irregular heartbeat. Several treatments are available for hyperthyroidism including medication or radioactive iodine to slow the production of thyroid hormones.

Taking synthetic medications to help replace the hormones may help; however, it is not an exact biochemical match to your natural thyroxine. Therefore, even with medication, it is important to choose certain foods that help thyroid function, properly cook certain foods with goitrogenic compounds that interfere with thyroid hormones, avoid certain foods that interfere with the medication, and follow an anti-inflammatory dietary plan.

### **Foods for thyroid health:**

- Fish, eggs, beans, yogurt, and apples for natural iodine
- Organic chicken and grass-fed beef for zinc
- Bananas, spinach, nuts, and seeds for magnesium
- Berries and carrots for anti-oxidants
- Brazil nuts and brown rice for selenium
- Spices such as celery seed and turmeric for anti-inflammation

### **Foods to avoid:**

- Soy products
- Raw goitrogen-rich vegetables such as kale, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts (cook these vegetables to remove the goitrogen compounds)
- Excess caffeinated products (caffeine can affect thyroid function)

Choosing the right combinations of food for your internal health will offer you the results you want and help you to shine inside and out. [Her Signature](#) optimizes each of your body's systems including circulatory, digestive, endocrine, exocrine, immune, muscular, nervous, renal, reproductive, respiratory, and skeletal for overall health and well-being.

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