

Natural Healing Express Weekly

Column 209 Helping Your Thyroid

This time of year, the thyroid gets chatted about a lot more. Why is that? Perhaps that in October, possibly due to the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign, women actually take an extra ten minutes to think about themselves for once? I am not quite sure.

However, one thing is for sure – a healthy thyroid system is critical for good health. Having an upset thyroid usually wreaks havoc with your metabolism and many symptoms occur. The thyroid hormone, insulin and cortisol basically control your metabolism and therefore your weight. So, the bad news here is that you can theoretically work out excessively and still not lose weight if there is a thyroid issue.

And how do you know for sure something is amiss with the thyroid? The key is the right testing to confirm that a sluggish thyroid is contributing to a stalled metabolism and other problems. Once you know this for sure there are many ways to help correct thyroid problems.

So, what is the best approach? Dr. Mark Hyma, a leading expert in this category, sheds some light on the topic. “Most doctors just check something called thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), which doesn't give a full picture of the thyroid. In fact, even the interpretation of this test is incorrect most of the time.

The newer guidelines of the American College of Endocrinology consider anybody with a TSH level over 3.0 as hypothyroid. (1) Most doctors think that only anything over 5 or 10 is worth treating. Unfortunately, this leaves millions suffering unnecessarily.

Besides TSH, Functional Medicine practitioners perform other essential tests including free T3, free T4, and thyroid antibodies. We also look for associated problems such as [gluten intolerance](#), [food allergies](#), and [heavy metals](#), as well as deficiencies of [vitamin D](#), selenium, vitamin A, zinc, and [omega-3 fats](#).”

At Natural Healing Express, we highly suggest chatting with your GP about these tests if you feel your thyroid may be sluggish. In my opinion, as well as Dr. Mark Hyman's, once you know for sure that this is an issue for you, “correcting these problems requires an integrative approach. It involves more than simply taking a thyroid pill.” In our case, Natural Healing Express has a wonderful product called Thyroid Support, but thorough healing involves good nutrition, exercise, stress reduction, reducing inflammation and detoxification.

Here are six methods designed to help formulate a healthy Thyroid. These are borrowed slightly from Dr. Hyman and sprinkled with my experience.

1: Have Your Thyroid Tested -There is no one perfect way, no one symptom nor test result, that will properly diagnose low thyroid function or hypothyroidism. The key is to look at the whole picture -- your symptoms and your blood tests -- and then decide.

Dr. Hyman states –“The diagnosis of "subclinical" hypothyroid depends on having a TSH level higher than 5 m IU/ml and lower than 10 m IU/ml. As I mentioned above, new guidelines suggest anything over

3 is abnormal. While an improvement, practitioners following these guidelines may still miss many people who have normal test results and a malfunctioning thyroid system.

To get a complete picture, Dr Hyman recommends looking at a wider range of functions:

- Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), the ideal range is between 1 and 2 m IU/ ml.
- Free T4 and free T3 (the inactive and the active hormone).
- Thyroid antibodies (TPO), looking for an autoimmune reaction that commonly goes undiagnosed if the other tests are normal, as doctors don't routinely check this.
- Thyroid-releasing hormone (TRH) stimulation test.
- A 24-hour urine test for free T3, which can be helpful in hard-to-diagnose cases.

A physician experienced in ordering these tests and interpreting the results can provide a more comprehensive picture of how your thyroid is functioning.

2: Eliminate the causes of thyroid problems. Carefully consider things that may interfere with your thyroid function and eliminate them. As we discuss with our clients at Natural Healing Express, NUTRITION is key. Dr Hyman adds, "There are food groups where substantive evidence supports a link to an autoimmune disease of the thyroid that slows down your metabolism.

Gluten is one of them. (3) If you think you are having a thyroid problem, you need to do a blood test to identify any hidden reaction to gluten found in wheat, barley, rye, oats, kamut, and spelt. Gluten sensitivity or allergy can cause many different types of symptoms, from migraines to fatigue to weight gain.

Besides certain foods and food allergies, toxins can slow down your thyroid. Testing yourself for [mercury](#) and getting it out of your system and your environment becomes crucial. (4) You also want to avoid fluoride, which has been linked to thyroid problems, (5) and chlorinated water.

[Stress](#) also affects your thyroid function negatively. Treating the thyroid without dealing with chronic stress can precipitate more problems.

A common form of chronic stress -- adrenal gland exhaustion or burnout -- particularly becomes dangerous for hypothyroidism. Adrenal gland exhaustion occurs when your adrenal glands are unable to keep up with the physiological needs created by stress."

At Natural Healing Express we sell a wonderful product called Nutri-Calm to help with both acute and chronic stress.

3: Eat Foods That Provide Nutritional Support for Your Thyroid, and Avoid Those That Don't

Every step on your road to healing and weight loss depends on proper nutrition and using food to communicate the right information to your genes. (8) Treating your thyroid is no exception.

Choose foods that offer nutritional support for your thyroid. The production of thyroid hormones requires iodine and omega-3 fatty acids; converting the inactive T4 to the active T3 requires selenium;

and both the binding of T3 to the receptor on the nucleus and switching it on require vitamins A and D, as well as zinc. You will find these nutrients in a whole-food, clean, organic diet.

Thyroid-boosting foods include seaweed and sea vegetables, which contain iodine. Fish (especially sardines and salmon) contains iodine, omega-3 fats, and vitamin D. Dandelion, mustard, and other dark leafy greens contain vitamin A. Smelt, herring, scallops, and Brazil nuts contain selenium.

You want to avoid foods that can interfere with thyroid function. These include the aforementioned gluten. Also, choose clean sources of soy protein in moderation and avoid processed soy products.

4: Regular Exercise and Saunas - Exercise stimulates thyroid gland secretion and increases tissue sensitivity to thyroid hormones throughout the body. Ideally, you will want to sweat, and the exercise should be vigorous. Besides being an excellent way to relax your muscles and your mind, saunas or steam baths are a good way to flush your system of pesticides that could be contributing to your thyroid problem.

Per Dr Hyman, "Saunas are an important aid to weight loss and thyroid repair because as you lose weight, fat tissue releases stored toxins such as PCBs and pesticides (organochlorines). (6) These toxins lower your T3 levels, consequently slowing your resting metabolic rate and inhibiting your fat-burning ability. (7)

Detoxifying becomes an important part of improving your thyroid function. If you don't detoxify, your ability to lose weight decreases as you lose weight because of the released toxins' detrimental impact on thyroid function".

5: Use Supplements That Support Your Thyroid -Key nutrients for healthy thyroid function include a multivitamin and mineral supplement that contains selenium, iodine, zinc, vitamins A and D, and omega-3 fats (fish oil). As I mentioned above, at Natural Healing Express, we have a wonderful product called Thyroid Support.

If your adrenal glands are burned out from long-term stress, treating the thyroid without supporting the adrenal glands through relaxation and adaptogenic herbs (such as ginseng, rhodiola, or Siberian ginseng) can actually make you feel worse. And, I know this for a fact. That is why we are now carrying a wonderful NATURAL balancing drink that is quickly becoming the rage to replace sugary energy drinks. This is called Lotus and contains not only Rhodiola but Shizandra as well and it give you sustained energy while creating a balance in the system. Come try a sample.

6: Choose the Right Thyroid Hormone Replacement-Let us help you create a roadmap for your healing by working with you GP and finding an overall plan that will best suit your needs. If you decide to go the pharmaceutical route, know that careful monitoring is essential. Taking too much thyroid hormone or taking it if you don't need it can lead to undesirable side effects, including anxiety, insomnia, palpitations, and, over the long term, bone loss.

I hope that you find this information helpful and for those wondering about Dr. Hyman, here is a tidbit on his background.

Mark Hyman, M.D. believes that we all deserve a life of vitality -- and that we have the potential to create it for ourselves. That's why he is dedicated to tackling the root causes of chronic disease by harnessing the power of Functional Medicine to transform healthcare.. He is the Director of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine. He is also the founder and medical director of The UltraWellness Center, chairman of the board of the Institute for Functional Medicine.

References

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Enjoy! Hope to see you soon and as always, please contact us via one of the following methods. Natural Healing Express: Phone 815 990 8732, email: skscham@aol.com 204 W Main St, Lena, IL 61048.

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