

# Hypo-thyroid [Under-active thyroid]

## What is the Thyroid?

The Thyroid is located in front of the windpipe in the neck. It makes a hormone (body chemical) called Thyroxine.



## What is Thyroxine?

The Thyroxine hormone is carried round the body in the blood. It helps to keep the body's functions working at the correct speed.

## What is Hypo-thyroidism?

Hypo-thyroidism (under-active Thyroid gland) means the Thyroid gland is unable to make enough Thyroxine. Then the level of Thyroxine hormone in the body is low. This causes many of the body's functions to slow down.

## What are the symptoms of Hypothyroidism?

### Hypothyroidism

Easy to diagnose and treat -- if you think of it.

slowing of mind and body

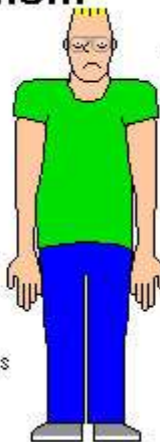
weak heartbeat

constipation

myxedema

high LDL

slow reflexes



hair thinning

depression  
"schizophrenia"  
irritability

big tongue

croaky voice

dry skin

cold skin

cold intolerance

Symptoms usually develop slowly, and gradually become worse over months or years.

## Who gets hypothyroidism?

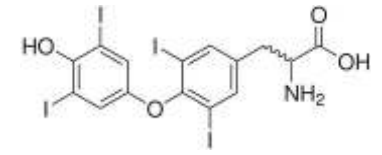
It is most common among adult women, and more with increasing age. However, it can occur at any age and can affect anyone. About 1 in 50 females, and 1 in 1,000 males develop hypothyroidism at some time.

## How is hypothyroidism diagnosed?

A blood test can diagnose hypothyroidism or rule it out.

## How is hypothyroidism treated?

The treatment is to take Levothyroxine (Thyroxine) tablets each day. Most people feel better soon after starting treatment. For most people, treatment is for life.



Your doctor usually sends you for blood tests every few months, and may adjust the dose according to the results.

## How do I take Thyroxine?

Some foods rich in calcium or iron may interfere with the absorption of Levothyroxine. Ideally, take the tablet on an empty stomach before breakfast. Don't take Levothyroxine tablets at the same time of day as calcium or iron tablets.

If you forget to take a dose, and you remember 2 or 3 hours after your usual time, take it as soon as you remember. If you remember after this time, skip the forgotten dose and take the next dose at the usual time. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Other medicines may interfere with the action of Levothyroxine - then you may need to alter the dose of the Levothyroxine. Your doctor will advise.

## Free prescriptions

If you have hypothyroidism, you are entitled to free prescriptions. This is for all your medicines, whether related to the hypothyroidism or not. Ask at your GP surgery for a form to fill in (form FP92A) to claim this benefit.

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