

Summer Blues – The Thyroid Connection

Summertime is such a wonderful time of the year, especially in this part of the country where the weather is magnificent, the flowers are in full bloom and all of nature's gifts are at our disposal to explore and enjoy. If despite all of this you are apathetic, chronically fatigued, have a lack of interest, perceived to be lazy and just don't feel like yourself anymore you may be suffering from an underactive thyroid.

The thyroid is a little bow tie shaped gland that sits under the adam's apple. It is the regulator of body metabolism. It is the gland which sets the thermostat for the rate that the body will use energy. Low functioning of the thyroid gland is frequently overlooked because it rarely shows up in blood tests and does so only in the more advanced cases. When the thyroid is underactive and does not show up on a blood test it is referred to as functional hypothyroidism. This condition is notoriously overlooked and mis-diagnosed. There are some simple tests you can perform at home to help you identify if you have a low functioning thyroid.

Other common symptoms of thyroid dysfunction are; frequent colds or infections, cold hands and feet or sensitivity to cold (could also be an iron deficiency) mood swings, depression, excessive menstrual flow – cramps or irregular periods, severe headaches, loss of libido, gains weight easily with an inability to lose weight, excessively dry skin, nails that are too soft, brittle hair or loss of hair, cracked or bleeding heels or hands, poor memory, crying very easily and constipation. Due to the lowered metabolic rate, the hypothyroid patient may have elevated cholesterol and/or triglycerides. There may be unexplained swelling of myxedema (fluid retention) anywhere in the body. The lateral third of the eyebrow may be very thin or completely gone.

Broda Barnes is a medical doctor with a Ph.D. in endocrinology. In his book "Hypothyroidism – The Unsuspected Illness" he discusses the use of the Barnes Basal Temperature Test. Basal refers to the time the body is at total rest. Shake a thermometer down at night and leave near your bedside. The first thing in the morning, before you get out of bed place the thermometer directly in the armpit for 10 minutes. Do this at least 2 to 3 days in a row, preferably a whole week. The normal temperature should be between 97.8 and 98.2. Anything below this will usually indicate a hypothyroid condition. Women should take this reading the 2nd or 3rd day after their menstrual flow has started. Blood tests may show normal level of thyroid hormone but the problem is that even when the hormone levels fall within normal limits that hormone level may be too low for a particular person due to the thyroid not working at its maximum efficiency. The temperature test will pick up the slightest deficiency.

According to George Goodheart, D.C. the founder of Applied Kinesiology when the thyroid is weak there will be an associated weakness with the teres minor muscle which can be manually

tested. Also touching over the thyroid gland referred to as therapy localization will create weakness in a strong muscle if there is thyroid involvement.

The two main ingredients that the body needs to produce thyroid hormone are iodine and an amino acid called tyrosine. Iodine use to come to us from the oceans. As iodine would evaporate from the ocean into the atmosphere, the wind would carry iodine over the earth and when it would rain the iodine and other trace minerals would be deposited into the soils where our foods are grown. Today, the chemicals and smog in the air have destroyed airborne nutrients. In the early 1900's the world had iodine in the air that could be breathed. If the iodine level of the blood is low, the cells of the thyroid gland enlarge in an attempt to trap as many particles of iodine as possible. When the thyroid becomes enlarged and is visible, it is referred to as a simple goiter.

The iodine in salt is ionically bound iodine and does not supply enough available iodine to eliminate functional hypothyroidism. Iodine will combine with sodium and/or potassium more strongly than with any other element, therefore, the process of digesting and assimilating this combination is very difficult. Sodium and potassium iodide does not separate well from each other and therefore leaves little iodine that is bioavailable.

The recommended dosage of iodine is 150mcg. a day which may be inadequate due to our food sources being depleted. I usually recommend an ammonium iodide which has a very high body assimilation. This form becomes a free iodine which is the form that will raise the metabolism and restore the electrical balance of the body. The product is called iosol and put out by a company called TPCS. Dr. John Thie, Sr., M.D. states in his book entitled 'Foy, Fountain of Youth' that ammonium iodide can also help with a hyperthyroid condition and that the sodium or potassium based iodide tablets or liquids can do more harm than good. Too much iodine can also inhibit thyroid function and some people are sensitive or allergic to iodine. Never inject the type of iodine that you put on cuts and check with your health care provider to be sure that iodine is appropriate for you and that you are not reactive to the form that you will be taking.

The amino acid tyrosine as mentioned earlier is also a raw material for thyroid hormone – thyroxine to be produced. The usual dosage would be 500mg. twice a day assuming it was determined that you need it and are not sensitive to it.

Other supportive measures would be homeopathic thyroid support, glandular concentrates, bioenergetic therapies to direct energy to the thyroid and the detection of dietary influences that may be inhibiting thyroid function. The reason one would want to try to use natural remedies is due to a study that appeared in JAMA in 1991 which suggested that the thyroid hormone levothyroxine may cause decreased bone density and therefore may be a risk for osteoporosis. Patients on thyroid hormone may experience rapid heart rates and anxiousness. All medications have some side affects associated with them.

If you haven't had your thyroid checked through a blood test and have symptoms ask your doctor to test it for you. There could be more serious problems with the thyroid that will absolutely require medical intervention and or a consultation with an endocrinologist. There are some people that will absolutely have to take thyroid hormone. If you get a clean bill of health from them or there is a simple sluggish hypothyroid you may first want to try natural approaches. You should work with your health care provider with this because you can make matters worse if you take supplements that your body is reactive to. The concept that if it doesn't help it can't hurt is ***not true!*** Be smart and seek professional care.

Dr. Silverman is a chiropractor and state certified nutritionist who has been in practice for 20 years. He has taught college level courses in holistic health and nutrition and has appeared on many TV and radio shows including the Gary Null show and News 12. He has lectured and consulted for several homeopathic and nutritional companies and has two offices, one in Hauppauge (631-724-6780) and one in Roslyn (516-484-0776.)