

LOW THYROID FUNCTION

Low thyroid function, called 'hypothyroidism' is a common disorder that can affect virtually all body systems. Since the hormones of the thyroid gland regulate metabolism, one of the major symptoms of low thyroid function is weight gain and fatigue. The severity of symptoms ranges from very mild thyroid deficiency that is barely detectable (known as 'sub-laboratory hypothyroidism') to severe deficiency states that are life-threatening (known as 'myxedema').

Symptoms of Low thyroid function:

- Unexplained weight gain
- Fatigue and cloudy thinking
- Feeling cold
- High LDL ('bad') cholesterol
- Hair thinning, dry skin and brittle nails
- Depression
- Muscle weakness or pain
- Constipation

If you are experiencing these symptoms, consult a naturopathic doctor or your family doctor for proper evaluation.

What Causes Low Thyroid Function?

- Stress: the stress hormone, cortisol, directly inhibits active thyroid hormones
- High estrogen levels and/or low

progesterone levels can inhibit thyroid function in women

- Nutritional deficiencies: adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals are necessary for optimal thyroid function
- Food allergies/intolerances, especially to gluten, can promote autoimmunity against the thyroid gland
- Toxic levels of mercury may inhibit thyroid gland function
- Environment toxins such as pesticides are associated with decreased thyroid function

How is Low Thyroid Function Treated?

Depending on the severity, you may need to take prescribed thyroid hormone. Under the supervision of a naturopathic doctor, select herbal medicines and nutritional supplements can also be taken with or without thyroid medication to support the thyroid and balance hormones. It is also important to support thyroid function with regular exercise, a healthy diet, adequate sleep, stress management and relaxation. A healthy lifestyle is crucially important to promoting thyroid health as well as preventing cardiovascular disease in people with low thyroid function. Talk to your naturopathic doctor about how you can take health-promoting steps in your everyday life.

SOURCE: **DR. AMANDA GUTHRIE**, BSc, ND, Naturopathic Doctor
28 Park Road (Yonge & Bloor), Toronto, ON M4W 1M1
416.944.9186 WholeHealthToronto.com

