

WHAT DOES THE THYROID GLAND DO?

Produces thyroid hormones:

- Thyroxine (T4)
- Triiodothyronine (T3)

Controlled by:

- Secretion of TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) from the pituitary gland in the brain

Regulates:

- Metabolism (energy use)
- Heart rate
- Body temperature
- Weight
- Mood and focus
- Bowel movements
- Growth and development (especially in children)

HOW DO I GET MY THYROID CHECKED?

Testing is based on symptoms. Ask your provider if testing is needed.

- **Neck Exam:** Checks for lumps, nodules, or swelling
- **Blood Tests:**
 - TSH – brain hormone that stimulates the thyroid gland to make thyroid hormone
 - T4 & T3 – active thyroid hormones
 - Thyroid Antibodies – checks for autoimmune thyroid disease
- **Imaging Tests:**
 - Ultrasound – shows nodules, size, and shape
 - Thyroid Uptake Scan – shows how active the gland is
- **Biopsy:** Needle sample of a thyroid nodule to check for cancer

WHAT IS THE THYROID GLAND?

- Small, butterfly-shaped gland
- Contains three parts: right lobe, left lobe, isthmus (center)
- Located in front of your neck, just below your Adam's apple
- Wraps around the windpipe (trachea)



Think of it as a control center for your body's energy and metabolism.

<https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-information>

HYPOTHYROIDISM (Underactive Thyroid)

Slows down your body

Symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Cold intolerance
- Depression
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Slowed heart rate

Diagnosis: TSH, T4, TPO Antibody

Causes:

- Most common = Hashimoto's thyroiditis (autoimmune +TPO Antibody)
- Iodine deficiency
- Surgery (removal of thyroid gland)

Treatment:

- Daily thyroid hormone replacement

HYPERTHYROIDISM (Overactive Thyroid)

Speeds up your body

Symptoms:

- Weight loss
- Rapid heartbeat
- Anxiety, irritability
- Heat intolerance
- Tremors
- Trouble sleeping
- Frequent bowel movements

Diagnosis:

- TSH, T4, T3
- TSI/TRAb antibodies
- Thyroid Uptake Scan

Causes:

- Most common = Graves' disease (autoimmune)
- Thyroid nodule (toxic adenoma)
- Thyroiditis (inflammation)

Treatment:

- Anti-thyroid medications
- Radioactive iodine therapy
- Surgery

THYROID NODULES (Lumps in the Thyroid)

Symptoms:

- Sometimes make excess hormone (leading to hyperthyroidism)
- Neck lump (visible or felt)
- Difficulty swallowing
- Voice hoarseness
- Trouble breathing, especially when lying flat

Diagnosis:

- Thyroid ultrasound
- Biopsy (if high risk for cancer)

Causes:

- Most are benign
- 5–10% are cancerous

Treatment Options:

- Surgery
- Radioactive iodine
- Radiofrequency ablation