



How to Treat Thyroid Problems

Three Methods: [Adjusting Your Diet and Your Lifestyle](#) [Taking Supplements and Hormones for Hypothyroidism](#) [Taking Supplements for Hyperthyroidism](#)

Your thyroid gland helps you maintain your energy levels, your body temperature, your weight, and your body's response to hormones. This essential gland is located at the base of your neck and wraps around the front of your neck like a bow tie. Thyroid problems can develop due to high stress, a viral or bacterial infection, or complications during pregnancy and childbirth.^[1] Common thyroid problems include hypothyroid, or an underactive thyroid, and hyperthyroid, or an overactive thyroid. You can treat thyroid problems by adjusting your diet and your lifestyle as well as by taking certain supplements and hormonal treatments. If your thyroid problems do not improve, you may need to see your doctor for further medical treatment.

Method
1

Adjusting Your Diet and Your Lifestyle

1 Maintain a whole-food, organic diet. Though it is not possible to cure your thyroid issues by adjusting your diet, changes to your diet can benefit your thyroid in positive ways. To maintain your health when you have thyroid issues, you should have foods that are not processed or prepackaged, as they can contain additives and preservatives that can irritate your thyroid. Go for whole-foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables as well as whole grain foods. Make sure all the produce you consume is organic and preferably, fresh or homemade.^[2]

- You should try to integrate seaweed or kelp into your meals if you are iodine deficient due to your thyroid issues. However, you should not have more than 158 to 175 micrograms of kelp a day. Avoid taking kelp capsules or a surplus of kelp, as too much iodine in your system can cause issues.^[3]

2 Avoid foods that can negatively affect your thyroid if you are hypothyroid. If you have hypothyroid, where your thyroid is underactive, you should avoid or limit your consumption of certain foods that can affect your thyroid. Vegetables like cabbage, turnips, Brussels sprouts, rutabagas, broccoli, cauliflower and bok choy can all interfere with your thyroid's ability to take in iodine.

- Do not have soy products if you have hypothyroidism, as soy can hinder your body's ability to absorb hormones that can help your thyroid function properly.^[4]
- You should also avoid cassava, a root vegetable popular in Caribbean cooking. Cassava is known to produce toxins that can slow down an underactive thyroid.^[5]
- If you have hyperthyroidism, you should increase your intake of these vegetables, as they can help to counter an overactive thyroid.

3 Do not drink alcohol or smoke tobacco products. These substances can have a negative effect on your thyroid. You should also avoid certain drugs such as Lithium, Thionamides, Alpha Interferon, Interleukin-2, Cholestyramine, Perchlorate, Expectorants, Aluminum hydroxide and Raloxifene.

- If you are not sure if the medications you are taking are safe for use while smoking or drinking alcohol, you should talk to your doctor.

4 Use stress management techniques like deep breathing and yoga. Stress can cause thyroid problems to get worse. Try to do one stress management technique a day, such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, and tai chi.

- **Deep breathing** exercises can be done at home in a quiet, secluded area or at your desk with your office door closed. Take a comfortable seated position in your chair or on the floor. Practice inhaling deeply through your nose for four counts and then exhaling through your nose for four counts. Try to deep breathe with your eyes closed and your body relaxed for five to ten minutes a day.
- You can also do yoga poses that focus on relaxation, such as corpse posture, where you lay on your back with your eyes closed and your body relaxed. You can also take a relaxation yoga class, which will focus on poses that will encourage your body to de-stress.^[6]

5 Do 30 minutes of exercise a day. A moderate amount of cardio exercise is also recommended for individuals with thyroid issues. Squeeze in a 20-30 minute walk or jog one a day. You can also do 30 minutes of cardio machines at the gym.

- Exercising will help your body stay healthy and encourage your thyroid to function properly. Doing 30 minutes of exercise a day can also help your body to de-stress and allow you to burn off any feelings of anxiety.

Method 2

Taking Supplements and Hormones for Hypothyroidism

1 Take supplements if you do not consume enough vitamins and minerals in your diet. It can be tricky to balance the vitamins and minerals present in your diet with any vitamin or mineral supplements you are taking. You should monitor your vitamin and mineral levels on a constant basis to ensure you are not absorbing too much of a certain vitamin or mineral, as this can cause health problems.^[7]

- For example, iodine supplements are useful for individuals with hypothyroidism who do not consume iodized salt in their diet or any other sources of iodized salt, such as seafood or fast food. You may be low in iodine and require iodine through supplements as there is not enough iodine in your diet.
- If you do eat iodized salt and foods that contain iodized salt, you may not need iodine supplements as too much iodine can cause adverse health issues. Talk to your doctor before taking any supplements for your thyroid problems.

2 Have daily mineral supplements. If you are suffering from hypothyroidism, you should consider taking minerals like iodine, selenium, and zinc. These minerals can help your thyroid get the minerals and vitamins it needs to function properly. Look for high quality mineral supplements from health food stores or supplement stores, as this will ensure you are taking supplements that contain enough minerals.^[8]

- You can take iodine supplements (150-1500 mcg/day) or have ½ teaspoon of iodized table salt a day.
- Take selenium supplements, 200-400 mcg/day.
- You can also take zinc supplements, 20-40 mg/day and copper supplements, 4-5 mg/day. This will prevent copper deficiency.^[9]

3 Take daily vitamin supplements. You should also integrate vitamin supplements into your daily routine to maintain your health and keep your energy levels up.^[10]

- Fish oils are anti-inflammatory and can help to reduce auto-antibodies present in your body due to hypothyroidism. Have 2-3 grams of omega-3 fish oils every day. If you have been diagnosed with a type of hypothyroidism called Hashimoto's thyroiditis, you can increase your intake of omega-3 fish oils to 3-4 grams a day.
- Take 2-3 times the recommended daily amount of B-vitamins to help maintain high energy throughout the day.
- You can also take 1000-2000 IU of vitamin D a day.
- You can take anti-oxidants like beta-carotene (3-6 mg/day), vitamin C (1000-3000 mg/day) and vitamin E (400-8000 IU/day).

4 Have anti-inflammatory botanical supplements. You can also integrate botanical supplements into your diet or cook with botanicals to improve your health. For example, spices like turmeric, cayenne pepper, and ginger as well as healthy oils like olive oil can all be taken as supplements or used in cooking.

- You can also take natural supplements like Boswellia^[11], grape seed extract, green tea, and pycnogenol or

Maritime Pine.^[12]

5 Get a prescription for thyroid replacement hormones from your doctor. A normally functioning thyroid will produce prohormones known as T4 or thyroxine, which is then converted to an active form known as T3 or triiodothyronine. If you have a thyroid problem and your thyroid is not working properly, your doctor should monitor your T4 and T3 levels on a regular basis. She may also recommend that you take thyroid replacement hormones to increase your T4 and T3 levels, allowing your thyroid to function more normally.^[13]

- Individuals with hypothyroidism can take thyroid replacement hormones to increase their T4 levels using synthetic T4, also known as Levothyroxine. You can also take synthetic T3, known as Liothyronine or Cytomel if you cannot convert T4 well in your body. Synthetic T3 is a good option for individuals who do not want to consume animal products or pork products.
- Thyroid hormones can be derived from animal sources, primarily pig. Many bio-identical thyroid hormones contain dried pig thyroids. Talk to your doctor about hormones from animal sources, such as Armour, Erfa, and Nature-Throid, if you are concerned about using synthetic hormones.

6 Consume the replacement hormones on an empty stomach. Your doctor should direct you to have your replacement thyroid hormones on an empty stomach to allow your body to absorb the thyroid properly. You should also avoid eating certain foods or foods that contain too much dietary fiber at the same time as you take the hormones, including:^[14]

- Walnuts
- Soybean flour
- Cottonseed meal
- Iron supplements or multivitamins containing iron
- Calcium supplements
- Antacids that have aluminum or magnesium
- Ulcer medications or drugs that can help to lower your cholesterol levels
- Have these foods several hours before or several hours after consuming your replacement thyroid hormones to ensure there are no adverse reactions in your body to the hormones.

Method
3

Taking Supplements for Hyperthyroidism

1 Do not take iodine supplements or consume iodized salt. If you have hyperthyroidism, your body is producing too much of the thyroid hormone. Iodine can irritate your thyroid and cause health issues, so it is not recommended for individuals with hyperthyroidism.^[15]

2 Have mineral supplements. You can take several mineral supplements once a day to help manage your hyperthyroidism, including:^[16]

- Selenium, 200-400 mcg/day
- Zinc, 20-40 mg/day
- Copper, 4-5 mg/day
- Calcium: This mineral is especially important for individuals with Graves' disease, a common disorder in people with hyperactive thyroids. Graves' disease can cause brittle, weak bones or osteoporosis, and calcium supplements can help to reduce these risks.^[17]

3 Take vitamin supplements. Start with a good, whole-food vitamin, which is derived from food rather than synthesized in a lab, and produced from food with very little processing. You can then take other vitamin supplements, including:^[18]

- 2-3 grams of omega-3 fish oils every day. If you have Graves' disease, you should aim for 3-4 grams of fish oil a day.
- B-vitamins to increase your energy levels. Take two to three times the recommended daily amount of B-vitamins.
- Anti-oxidant vitamins, such as vitamin C (2000 mg/day), vitamin E (400-800 IU/day), l-carnitine (2-4 g/day), and

CoQ10 (50-100 mg/day). L-carnitine has been shown to reduce thyroid hormone production in your body. CoQ10 has been shown to be low in individuals with hyperthyroidism.

4 Add botanical supplements to your diet. Only take botanical supplements once you have consulted a qualified naturopathic physician. Several botanical supplements have been shown to block the production of thyroid hormones in your body, including:^[19]

- *Lycopus spp* (Bugleweed)^[20]
- *Lithospermum officinale*^[21]
- *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon balm)^[22]
- *Iris versicolor*^[23]
- *Emblica officinalis* (Indian gooseberry)^[24]

Sources and Citations

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