



Hashimoto's Thyroiditis

Your thyroid is located in the front of your neck and produces hormones that control your metabolism including your heart rate and how efficiently your body uses calories from the foods you eat.

What Is Hashimoto's Thyroiditis?

- An autoimmune disease in which your immune system turns on your own body's tissue, in this case your thyroid.
- Leads to hypothyroidism causing the thyroid to produce an insufficient amount of thyroid hormone.

Cause

The cause is unknown, however many factors play a role. These include:

- **Genetics**-Individuals with Hashimoto's often have family members who have thyroid disease or other autoimmune diseases.
- **Hormones**-Hashimoto's affects more women than men suggesting sex hormones play a role.
- **Excessive Iodine**-Certain medications and too much iodine may trigger Hashimoto's in those susceptible. Iodine is a trace element needed by your body to make thyroid hormones.
- **Radiation Exposure**-Radiation treatments for blood cancers and exposure to other radiation such as a nuclear accident, as experienced in Chernobyl, can increase chances for developing thyroid disease.

Symptoms of Hashimoto's Thyroiditis

- Symptoms may be mild at first, taking years to develop.
- An enlarged thyroid called a goiter creates swelling in the front of the neck, sometimes making swallowing difficult. This may not always happen.
- Other symptoms include:
 - Weight gain
 - Fatigue
 - Paleness or puffiness of the face
 - Joint and muscle pain
 - Constipation
 - Hair loss, brittle or thinning hair
 - Inability to get warm
 - Depression
 - Slow heart rate
 - Irregular or heavy menstrual periods

Treatments for Hashimoto's Thyroiditis

- There is no cure however, replacing thyroid hormones helps to regulate hormone levels restoring your normal metabolism.
- Thyroid hormone replacement is determined by your age, weight, severity of hypothyroidism, and other health conditions.
- Some medications can interact with synthetic thyroid hormones.
- Labs are performed to monitor thyroid function and ensure proper dosage.
- Thyroid hormones work slowly in the body taking months for symptoms to resolve.
- Addressing the autoimmune component is also important. May use a medication called low dose naltrexone (LDN) to help regulate the immune system. Your practitioner may also make other suggestions to help with autoimmunity.