

JANUARY PREVENTIVE HEALTH TOOLKIT

# Thyroid Awareness Month



January is National Thyroid Awareness Month. According to the American Thyroid Association, one in ten people has a thyroid disorder, and one in eight women will get a thyroid disorder during their lifetime. More than half of the people with thyroid disorders in the U.S. are undiagnosed.

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland at the base of your neck, below your Adam's apple. It makes hormones that travel through your blood to every tissue in your body. These hormones help your body use energy, stay warm, and keep your brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working as they should. Sometimes, the thyroid doesn't work the way it should. If it makes too little hormone, it's called hypothyroidism. If it makes too much, it's called hyperthyroidism. To diagnose thyroid problems, your doctor will review your medical history, do a physical exam, and order blood tests. The good news is that most thyroid disorders can be managed or even cured with medication or other treatments.

Learn more with the activities in this toolkit:

- **Thyroid cancer fact sheet**
- **Test your knowledge**
- **Matching game**

**The American Cancer Society estimates that there were 44,000 new thyroid cancer diagnoses in 2024.** (Source: [ACS](#))

 **Questions?**

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# Health disparities

Health disparities are preventable differences in health between groups of people due to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, education, economic status, where they live, disability, etc. Health disparities are a complicated and challenging problem around the world. The health of a community is shaped mostly by social factors. For example, having access to healthcare, a safe area to live, racial equity, healthy food, good education, and supportive relationships free of discrimination are all very important to overall health.

Thyroid disorders don't affect all groups of people the same. People face different levels of risk based on their environment, genetics, hormones, and more. Access to affordable healthcare, socioeconomic status, and cultural factors can be barriers to screening and treatment for thyroid disorders.

## Did you know?

- Thyroid cancer is almost three times more common in women than in men. It's about 40% to 50% less common in Black people than in any other racial or ethnic group. (Source: [ACS](#))
- Hyperthyroidism is more common in women and people older than 60. (Source: [NIH](#))
- Your risk for hypothyroidism is higher if you have other health problems, including celiac disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, or lupus. (Source: [NIH](#))

For more information, please visit:

- [American Cancer Society: Thyroid cancer](#)
- [NIH: Hyperthyroidism](#)
- [NIH: Hypothyroidism](#)



# Thyroid cancer fact sheet

Learn more about thyroid cancer and its signs and symptoms with this fact sheet.

- Thyroid cancer is often diagnosed at a younger age, unlike most cancers in adults. Nearly three out of four cases are in women.
- There is no routine screening for thyroid cancer. Doctors test for it based on symptoms or findings during exams.
- Thyroid cancer can be detected early and successfully treated.
- Most thyroid cancers are treated by surgically removing the affected area.
- There are four types of thyroid cancer:
  - Papillary: The most common type. It grows slowly and usually affects one lobe of the thyroid.
  - Follicular: Less common. It also grows slowly.
  - Medullary: Develops in C cells and is often linked to a genetic condition called multiple endocrine neoplasia (MEN), and accounts for 5-10% of thyroid cancers.
  - Anaplastic: Rare, fast-growing, and harder to treat.
- Thyroid cancer can cause the following signs or symptoms:
  - A lump in the neck, near the Adam's apple
  - Loss of voice or hoarseness
  - Swollen glands in the neck
  - Trouble swallowing
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Neck or throat pain
  - Persistent, unexplained coughing
- Other conditions can also cause these symptoms, so it's important to talk to your doctor if you have any of them. This will help your doctor explore possible thyroid problems and get you the care you need.

## Test your knowledge

How much do you know about the thyroid gland and the role it plays in your body?

[Take the quiz](#)

# Matching game

Can you match the different signs, symptoms, and causes to the correct type of thyroid disorder?

(Hint: Sometimes, you'll need to check both boxes.) The answer key is on the last page.

Sign/Symptom/Cause	HYPERThyroidism	HYPOTHYroidism
Tiredness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weight gain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unintentional weight loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling down/depressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervousness, anxiety, irritability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems with memory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased sweating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased sensitivity to heat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased sensitivity to cold	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased bowel movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constipation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rapid or irregular heartbeat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tremors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muscle weakness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swollen glands in the neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to skin and/or hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High cholesterol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hoarseness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes in menstrual patterns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graves' disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autoimmune disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Talk to your doctor if you're experiencing any of the symptoms listed above.

# Matching game: answer key

Sign/Symptom/Cause	HYPERthyroidism	HYPOthyroidism
Tiredness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weight gain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unintentional weight loss	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling down/depressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nervousness, anxiety, irritability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems with memory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased sweating	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased sensitivity to heat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased sensitivity to cold	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased bowel movements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constipation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rapid or irregular heartbeat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tremors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muscle weakness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Swollen glands in the neck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Changes to skin and/or hair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High cholesterol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hoarseness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Changes in menstrual patterns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Graves' disease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autoimmune disease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Resources

[Thyroid cancer risk factors \(ACS\)](#)

[Hyperthyroidism \(Mayo Clinic\)](#)

[Hypothyroidism \(Mayo Clinic\)](#)

[Thyroid conditions during pregnancy \(March of Dimes\)](#)