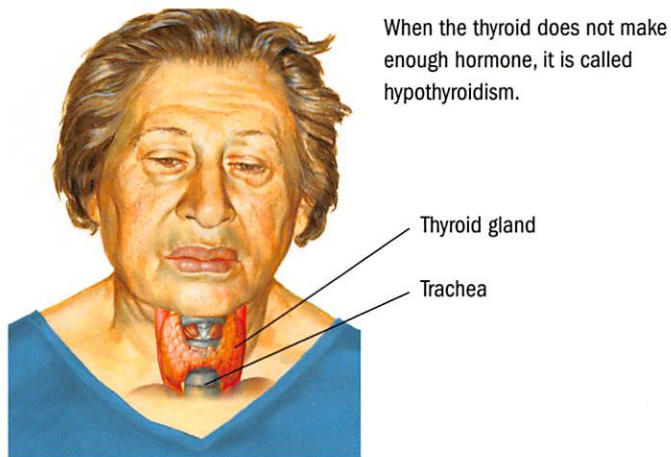
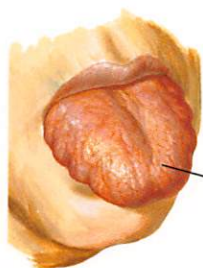


MANAGING YOUR HYPOTHYROIDISM



When the thyroid does not make enough hormone, it is called hypothyroidism.



Symptoms may include tiredness, coldness, constipation, swollen face and eyelids, and changes in voice and hair texture.



Enlarged tongue and dark rough patches of skin are signs of severe hypothyroidism.

Thyroid hormone levels can be measured in blood.



What Is Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism is a disorder of the thyroid gland, which is an endocrine gland in your neck. The thyroid produces hormones (thyroxine or T_4 and triiodothyronine or T_3). These hormones affect how the body works (e.g., control metabolism). In hypothyroidism, the gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. Hypothyroidism affects both sexes. It can occur at any age but is more common in adult women.

What Causes Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism is usually caused when the body makes antibodies (proteins that are part of the immune system) against its own thyroid gland. This form is called an autoimmune disease. It can also occur after treatment for hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid) and as a side effect of some medicines.

What Are the Symptoms of Hypothyroidism?

Mild hypothyroidism may not cause symptoms. One person will probably not have all the symptoms but may have several of the following ones.

Poor appetite and difficulty with bowel movements (constipation) may lead to gaining or losing weight. Anemia may develop. Becoming pale, feeling cold and unable to sweat, and often feeling tired are possible.

Problems with mental abilities may include poor memory and feeling depressed. Trouble sleeping at night and numbness and tingling in hands and feet may occur.

Hair may become coarse, thin, or grow slowly. The voice may get deeper and hoarse. Some people may feel the effects in other parts of the body. They may have shortness of breath and changes in heart rate. Fluid may be retained, especially around the eyes. Women may have problems with periods. Both men and women may have less interest in sex. In severe hypothyroidism, the tongue may become enlarged (macroglossia) and the skin may look darkened and rough (hyperkeratosis).

How Is Hypothyroidism Diagnosed?

The doctor will do a complete physical examination and measure levels of thyroid hormones in the blood.