

Hyperthyroidism

Series N.15a



Patient's Guide

Easy Readability Leaflet

Hyperthyroidism - Series 15a (Revised August 2006)

This leaflet was produced by Fernando Vera MSc and Prof Gary Butler at the Institute of Health Sciences, University of Reading, Reading, UK (August, 2006). Some portions of the text were extracted or modified from the Growth and Growth Disorders Booklet Series (Third edition, 2000)* and may be used in conjunction with these as they provide a choice of leaflets providing the same information, but for people of different ages and reading abilities. The numbering sequence in each series is the same for easy cross-reference. The original leaflet series can be also obtained from the links given at the end.

All illustrations were created and produced by Fernando Vera MSc.

This leaflet is part of the Hormone Disorders Leaflet Series. The following are also available:

- Series N 3.** Puberty and the Growth Hormone Deficient Child.
- Series N 4.** Precocious Puberty
- Series N 5.** Emergency Information for Children with Cortisol and GH Deficiencies and those Experiencing Recurrent Hypoglycaemia.
- Series N 6.** Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Series N 7.** Growth Hormone Deficiency in Young Adults.
- Series N 10.** Constitutional delay of growth and puberty
- Series N 11.** Multiple Pituitary Hormone Deficiency
- Series N 12.** Diabetes Insipidus
- Series N 13.** Craniopharyngioma
- Series N 14.** Intrauterine Growth Retardation or Small Gestational Age
- Series N 15.a.** Hyperthyroidism
- Series N 15.b.** Hypothyroidism
- Series N. 16.** Type 2 Diabetes and Obesity

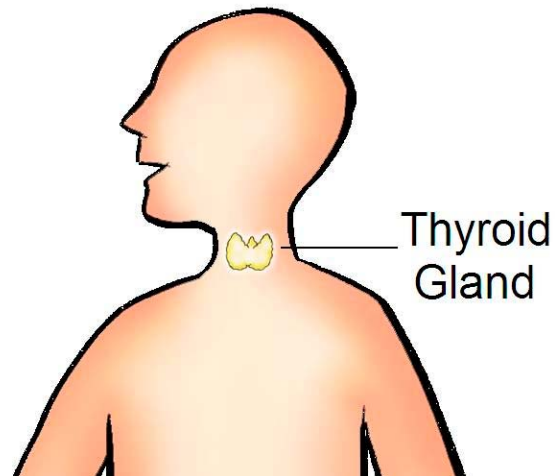
The development of these leaflets was funded (as a service to medicine) by Serono-Merck Ltd, Bedfont Cross, Stanwell Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 8NX, UK. Additional help was provided by the Child Growth Foundation (www.childgrowthfoundation.org).

*Written by Dr Richard Stanhope (Gt. Ormond Street/Middlesex Hospital, London) and Mrs Vreli Fry (Child Growth Foundation)

Hello!

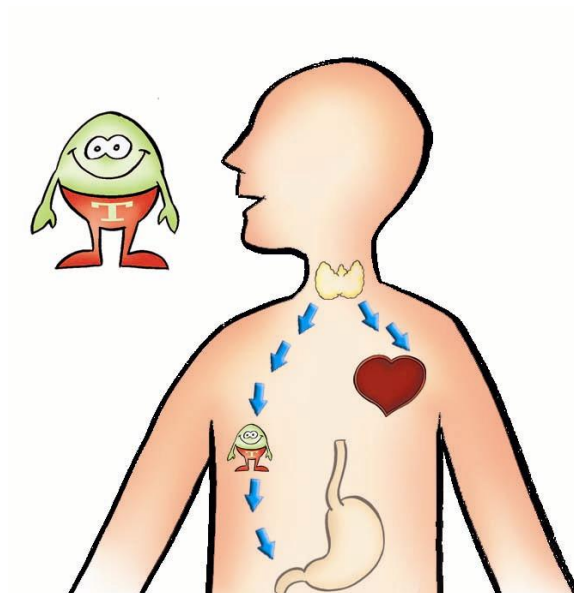
Today we'll tell you about **Hyperthyroidism**. You may think that it sounds a bit difficult, but do not worry! We'll tell you what it means, why it happens and how doctors treat it.

First, let's talk a bit about a small organ in your body called the **thyroid gland**. This organ is located in your neck, just below the Adam's apple. The thyroid gland helps to control the speed at which your body works.



What does the thyroid gland do?

The thyroid gland is in charge of controlling the speed at which the body works. It does this by making and sending a special messenger to the organs in your body. This messenger is called **thyroxine** and it tells the organs just how much to work!



If the thyroid gland sends too much thyroxine, your body will work too fast. But, if too little is sent, then your body will work too slowly!

For the body to work at the right speed, it's important to have normal amounts of thyroxine.

What is Hyperthyroidism?

Normally, the thyroid gland works fine all through our lives. But sometimes, it begins to make **too much thyroxine**. This excess of thyroxine is called **hyperthyroidism**.

Why does this happen?

Hyperthyroidism usually appears as part of a disease called **Graves'** disease.

What does this cause?

Since **too much thyroxine** is being made by the thyroid gland, this will affect your body in the following ways:

- **Fast heartbeat:** This happens because your heart is working faster than it should be.



- **Fast growth:** You may grow much faster than your peers.
- **Increase hunger:** You may feel much hungrier than before, but at the same time you may also lose weight.
- **Having too much energy:** You may feel very energetic, but this often doesn't allow you to concentrate or sleep well at night.

- **Swallowing problems:** You may feel a constant lump in the throat. This makes swallowing hard.
- **Eye difficulties:** You may notice that your eyes appear larger than before. This could affect your eye movement and how well you see.

How do I know if I have this hyperthyroidism?

Doctors will tell you if you have hyperthyroidism. They will do a test to find out. This test is very simple and they only need a bit of your blood. Don't worry they will put some special cream on your skin, so this won't hurt!

How is this treated?

Doctors will give you some tablets for treatment. These tablets will help to lower the amount of thyroxine in your body. It's very important that you take it everyday as indicated by the doctor. Although, this medicine will help a lot, further treatment may be needed.



Why is further treatment needed?

Usually, the medicines you take will not be enough to fix the excess production of thyroxine made by the thyroid gland. To fully fix this problem, doctors may need to do an operation. In this operation they will remove most of the thyroid gland. This will help to lower the amount of thyroxine that is produced.

Another treatment that may be used instead of this operation is **Radioiodine Treatment**. In this type of treatment, you will need to take some medicine by mouth.

Congratulations!

Now you know about hyperthyroidism, why it happens and how it's treated. If you have not understood some things in this leaflet, don't feel shy to ask your doctor or other friendly people in the hospital. They will happily explain these or any other doubts you may have.

