

Hypothyroidism

Series N. 15b



Patient's Guide

Easy Readability Leaflet

Hypothyroidism - Series 15b (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

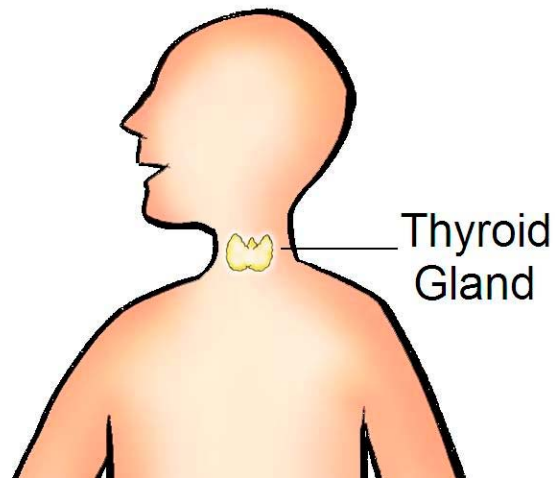
The development of these leaflets was funded (as a service to medicine) by Serono-Merck Ltd, Bedfont Cross, Stanwell Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 8NX, UK. Additional help was provided by the Child Growth Foundation (www.childgrowthfoundation.org).

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Hello!

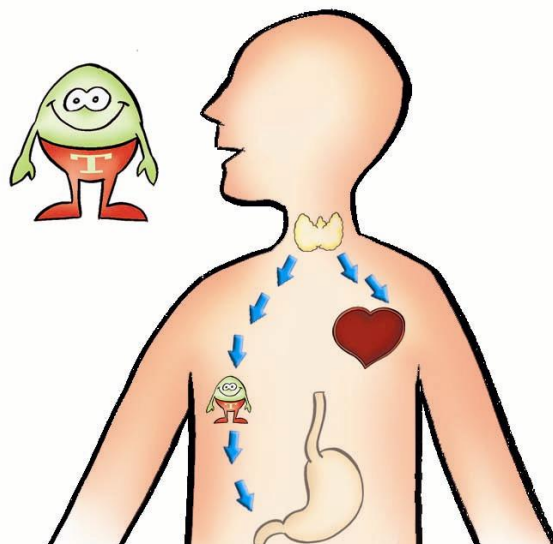
Today we'll tell you about **Hypothyroidism**. You may think that it sounds a bit difficult, but do not worry! We'll tell you what it means, why it happens and how doctors treat it.

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?

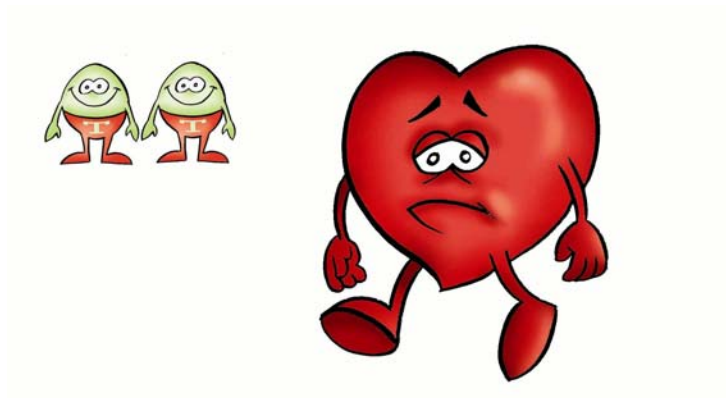
The thyroid gland is in charge of controlling the speed at which the body works. It does this by making and sending a special messenger to the organs in your body. This messenger is called **thyroxine** and it tells the organs just how much to work!



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 Hypothyroidism?

Normally, the thyroid gland works fine all through our lives. But sometimes, it stops working and does not make anymore thyroxine. This lack of thyroxine is called **hypothyroidism**. Some children are born with this. In others, it appears later in life.

What can Hypothyroidism do to children?

It can cause children to grow slower than normal. It may also cause some weight gain. Other changes may include having a pale or puffy face, and losing some hair.

How is this treated?

As you already know, hypothyroidism happens when there is a lack of thyroxine. To treat this, you will need to take tablets that contain thyroxine in the amount your body needs.



It's very important that you take these tablets **every day**. Otherwise, you may not grow as tall as your mates!

Congratulations!

Now you know about hypothyroidism, 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.

