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Hypothyroidism Weight Loss Guidelines



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What is Hypothyroidism?

The thyroid gland, which is located below the Adam's apple, produces hormones that help regulate metabolism. If the thyroid is functioning properly, the regular release of hormones keeps your system functioning on a normal level. When your thyroid doesn't produce the right amount of hormones, however, a condition known as under-active thyroid disease, or hypothyroidism, occurs. Weight gain is one of the leading symptoms of hypothyroidism

According to the Hormone.org web site, thyroid hormones regulate how the body breaks down food and either uses that energy immediately or stores it for the future. In other words, our thyroid hormones regulate our body's metabolism. When thyroid hormones are unbalanced, physicians may prescribe thyroid medications to help maintain a proper balance. Some of these medications cause patients to lose weight.

There is a relationship between weight, metabolism and the thyroid. Not only does hypothyroidism slow down the metabolism and hence the rate at which calories is burned, it also makes you feel sluggish and less likely to be active and burn calories that way. Losing weight with a slow thyroid takes a targeted diet and fitness routine.

Symptoms

The early symptoms can be so subtle that the condition can go undetected for years. However, if hypothyroidism is left untreated, more serious health problems, such as heart disease and joint pain, can occur. Fatigue and low energy levels are two of the most common symptoms associated with hypothyroidism. Others symptoms may include the following:

Constipation

Depression

Muscle weakness

Dry skin

Puffiness

Sensitivity to cold

Joint stiffness and pain

Elevated cholesterol

Unexplained weight gain



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Dietary changes

Poor diet will exacerbate thyroid problems and in some cases can be a major cause of thyroid dysfunction. Junk food diets and excessive alcohol intake will deplete the body of nutrients required by the thyroid gland to produce thyroid hormones.

Stress management. High stress and corresponding high cortisol levels can impair thyroid hormone production. Stress management techniques in the form of meditation, yoga and more formal psychological counseling can be beneficial.

Lifestyle changes

Having adequate sleep, time to relax, engaging in pleasurable activities plus a whole range of other lifestyle-related factors are important in improving thyroid function.

Supplementation

A range of nutrients are required for thyroid health and thyroid hormone production. Supplementation with nutrients such as iodine, selenium, tyrosine, zinc, vitamin C, iron, and B-vitamins can help improve thyroid hormone production. This can be particularly useful for people experiencing problems converting T4 to T3. Antioxidants can also be helpful in reducing free radical damage which can impair thyroid production.

Diet for Hypothyroidism

For many, unexplained weight gain is the stimulus that gets them off the couch and into the doctor's office. For those who religiously diet and exercise and yet cannot seem to lose weight, a diagnosis of hypothyroidism is the answer they've been searching for. Once they receive the diagnosis and start a regimen of medicines, they typically are able to start losing weight with proper diet and exercise.

Tips on how to increase weight loss:

Eat 6 small meals each day. Thyroid sufferers should not eat 3 heavy meals a day. Meals should be stretched throughout the day and consist of six mini-meals.

Control your portion sizes. You have to learn how to eyeball food and tell if it is the approved amount.



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Include carbohydrates in your diet, complex carbohydrates - Carbohydrates add to a balanced diet.

Drink a lot of water, it is recommended that you drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.

Exercise regularly

Because of your slower metabolism, you need to begin a regular workout routine. Working out speeds up your metabolism and keeps it revved all day long. Exercise for approximately a half hour to an hour each day, three to five days per week. If you are used to working out, consider increasing your workouts, working out for 10 minutes longer each day or an extra day each week. Muscle burns more calories than fat, so focus on lifting weights and toning.

Limit your sugar and carbohydrate intake

Hypothyroidism slows your body's ability to process carbohydrates as well as your cells' ability to absorb blood sugar, leading to excess insulin in your system, which fuels weight gain. Eat a diet that is moderate to high protein, low fat and low in carbohydrates. It's fine to include small amounts of healthy fats such as olive oil and avocados. Limit intake of rice, potatoes, bread, and most foods containing starches and sugar. Protein sources to include are lean meats such as turkey, eggs and tofu and nonstarchy vegetables and legumes. Eating this way will increase weight loss with a slow thyroid.

Ask your doctor about thyroid hormone replacement

Patients with low thyroid levels are often treated with a thyroid hormone to help speed their metabolism. If your doctor does not have you on a hormone replacement, ask about your options. If you are on one, but, despite a low-calorie diet and exercise, you still are gaining weight, ask about your other options such as a supplement to your thyroid medication.

Eat more fibrous foods

There are two types of fibre: insoluble and soluble. Insoluble fibre does not break down during digestion. It carries excess waste and water with it as it is being digested, which flushes toxins from the body. Find insoluble fiber in whole wheat, legumes, dark green vegetables and apples. Soluble fiber produces a gel in the digestive tract during digestion.



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This gel binds with fatty acids or cholesterol and removes them from the bloodstream to the bile acids. These types of fibre not only aid in waste loss and speeding up the metabolism, but also help lower high cholesterol, another symptom of hypothyroidism. Get these foods by eating nuts, oats and barley.

Avoid taking anything that could interfere with the absorption of your thyroid hormone

Certain supplements and foods, some calcium-fortified juices or too much soy powder may interfere with your thyroid hormone. Interferences with your thyroid hormone may affect its result on your metabolism and hinder your weight-loss goals.

Add two snacks during the day to keep your metabolism rate up

The metabolism slows when the body goes into starvation mode. Skipping meals or snacks can provoke this starvation mode to occur. Snack on low-calorie foods to prevent binges and your metabolism from slowing down.

Pick low-fat dairy products

Replace whole milk with 2 percent. Eat goat cheese, feta and low-fat cheese. Almond cheese and milk has little fat and almost no cholesterol. Experiment with different brands to find one that you like. Choose rice, coconut or almond dairy alternatives because soy products can prevent your thyroid medication from working properly.

Choose lean proteins over fatty meats

Fish, chicken and turkey are low in fat and calories. Use portion control when eating these proteins. Chicken and turkey portions should resemble the size of one deck of cards. Fish should be the size of a checkbook. Nuts are a great source of protein and Omega-3 fatty acids; however, they contain a lot of calories. Keep your portion of nuts to the size of a golf ball. Likewise, avoid eating peanuts for proper absorption of thyroid medication. Cheese should be the size of six dice. By visualizing common items, you are able to reduce the amount of calories you enjoy at meals.



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Add some spice to your diet

Cayenne pepper has shown in studies to decrease appetite and boost metabolism. Use hot sauce or cayenne powder on meals to speed up metabolism.

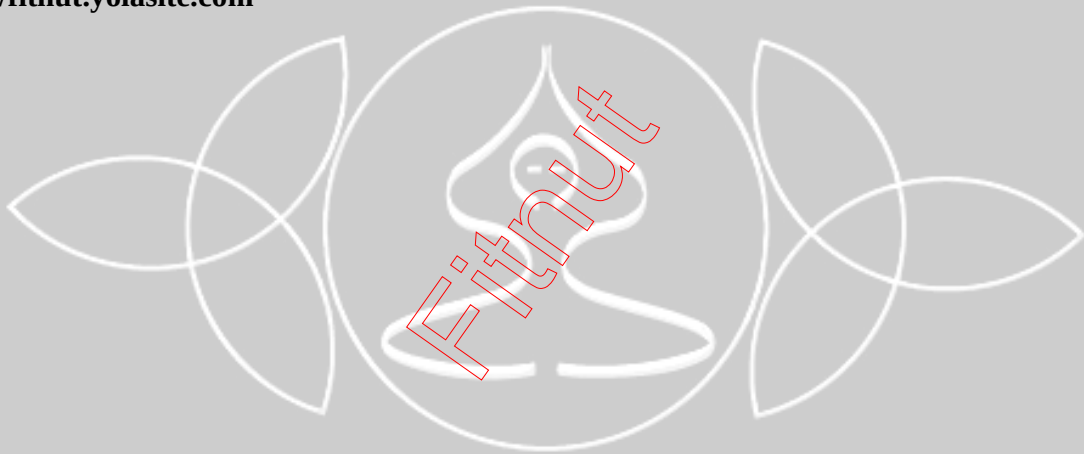
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