

Nutrition for Hypothyroidism

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is an endocrine gland that is responsible for releasing and controlling thyroid hormones. Thyroid hormones help control many processes in the body including: metabolism (how your body converts what you eat and drink into energy), digestion, heart function, managing body temperature, muscle contraction and skin and bone health.

What is hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid gland becomes underactive and doesn't make enough thyroid hormone for the body. Without enough thyroid hormones our metabolism slows down which can cause many different symptoms including:

- Feeling very tired
- Unexplained weight gain
- Trouble with losing weight
- Hair loss
- Constipation
- Tender or stiff muscles
- Higher cholesterol
- Issues with memory
- Dry or coarse skin and hair
- Heavy and irregular periods
- Sensitivity to cold
- Enlarged thyroid (goiter)

Nutrition for Hypothyroidism

There is no specific diet for hypothyroidism. It cannot be cured by changes to your diet. However, there are some things you can do to help manage symptoms :



Eat lots of non-starchy vegetables



Enjoy 1-2 servings of fruit each day



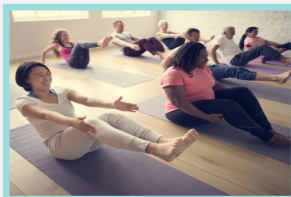
Eat foods with healthy fats like fish, seeds and nuts



Drink mostly water



Eat selenium rich foods like tuna, crab, or Brazil nuts*



Exercise and move your body in ways that you enjoy



Try to lower stress



Eat mostly whole grains

*To avoid consuming too much selenium, limit how many Brazil nuts you eat to **1 to 3 per day**.



What are goitrogens?

Goitrogens are found in certain foods like cabbage, collard greens, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, bok choy, millet, peaches, peanuts, and cassava root. Goitrogens may block the amount of iodine that gets to the thyroid, which can reduce thyroid function.

Cooking these foods may help to reduce their impact on thyroid function.

You do not have to avoid these foods all together. Instead choose to limit portions and eat them in their cooked form. Limit the amount you eat to 2 cups or less of these raw vegetables per day.



Medicines and Supplements

If you have hypothyroidism your doctor might prescribe a **synthetic thyroid hormone replacement pill** (such as levothyroxine, also known as Synthroid). Take this pill on an **empty stomach, about 30 to 60 minutes before breakfast.**

Some supplements can interfere with how this medicine works. You should wait **4 hours** after taking your thyroid medicine before taking the following:

- Iron supplements or multivitamins with iron
- Calcium supplements or multivitamins with calcium
- Magnesium supplements or multivitamins with magnesium
- Antacids

Talk to your doctor before starting any new supplements to find out if they are appropriate for you and how to take them safely.

Talk to your CHN Nutritionist if you have more questions!