Weight gain and hair loss due to thyroid disorder

June 27, 2011 By Rhonda Peters

I was one of the 8 million people who suffered with many problems, and didn't know what was going on. What was this problem that allowed me and others to walk around not noticing any differences in our health thus remaining undiagnosed--the culprit was Thyroid Disease! There are more than 20 million people suffer from a thyroid disorder, and of that number more than 10 million women have low-grade thyroid imbalance. So, how did I find out I had a problem? A family friend saw me during holiday break and told my mom that I needed to have my thyroid checked because my eyes looked bigger than normal. Though I was really offended at the time, her guess was correct! I had hyperthyroidism for months and never knew it!

What is thyroid?
The thyroid is a gland that sits in the neck and is shaped like a butterfly.

Is the thyroid gland important?
The main function of the thyroid gland is to produce thyroid hormone, which regulate the functioning of the body including regulating mood, emotions, and many other brain functions. In fact, this gland controls the body's metabolism; specifically it controls the amount of energy the body burns.

What happens if there is a problem with my thyroid gland?
If the thyroid gland is not performing correctly, there are two most common problems, which are as follows:
1. Hypothyroidism (Hashimoto's thyroiditis)--this occurs when there is not enough thyroid hormones thus causing the thyroid to become underactive; according to many studies this affects about 10 percent of the population and is the most common cause of an underactive thyroid.

2. Hyperthyroidism (Graves' disease)--this occurs when there is an excess of thyroid hormones thus causing the thyroid to be overactive.

What are some of the obvious signs of a thyroid problem?
Both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism have different signs or symptoms. The following are a few signs to make note of:

Hypothyroidism: weight gain, tiredness, increased sleepiness, hair loss including loss of eyebrows,

joint pain, constipation, forgetfulness, decreased ability to pay attention and focus, cold intolerant, depression, dry skin, etc.

Hyperthyroidism: weight loss, Fatigue, shakiness, increased bowel movement, restlessness, warm intolerant, rapid heartbeat, anemia, increased sweating, irregular menstrual periods, decreased fertility

Is thyroid disease hereditary?
Thyroid disease is an autoimmune disorder, and there is a high percentage that it could be hereditary, but it is not always the case. There could be other factors that trigger this disease and it differs for everyone.

Is there a way to find out if my thyroid gland is okay?
If you are uncertain about whether your thyroid is not properly functioning, please make an appointment with your general physician and ask to have your thyroid levels checked. This is not traditional tested in the yearly physical exams, it is only ordered if necessary or upon patient request. If your thyroid levels indicate that you are hypo or hyperthyroid active, then please make an appointment with an endocrinologist, a doctor who specializes in the endocrine system which includes the thyroid gland, or a naturopathic doctor who specializes in thyroid disorders.

I am writing this post not to scare you, but instead to give you information with the intent of you being proactive about your health. If you have more questions, please post a comment!

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