The Natural Thyroid Diet

Stop Eating The Foods That Damage Your Thyroid!

By Louise O’Connor
Naturopath & Wellness Coach
# The Natural Thyroid Diet

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Preface – The Natural Thyroid Diet

Have you tried no-fat diets, cutting calories and even crazy fad diets... but NOTHING has helped you lose the weight? No matter how much effort you put in or how many diets you try your weight seems to keep creeping up?

You know this isn’t normal. It shouldn’t be so hard to lose weight, and you should feel better. Could your thyroid be the culprit?

It’s no secret thyroid problems are epidemic, fast becoming the leading cause of weight gain. And many individuals suffer without even knowing it. When your thyroid becomes exhausted your metabolism slows to a crawl making it much harder to lose weight. In fact, your whole body suffers. An underactive thyroid not only causes ongoing weight gain, it is also linked to hair loss, anxiety, depression and unrelenting fatigue.

But you don’t have to suffer anymore. I know how you feel and I understand your thyroid problem. I am here to help you with a simple and powerful plan to restore your thyroid health.

Today, more than ever it is important to educate yourself about the value of good nutrition and healthy eating. One of the most important first steps you can take to recover your thyroid is to eliminate thyroid damaging foods. A natural thyroid diet provides a variety of fresh, natural foods that supply a wide range of nutrients to support healthy thyroid activity.

This e-book also contains in-depth information on how to get a real medical diagnosis, what the medical tests actually mean, the common indicators of low thyroid activity and outlines the common reasons why thyroid problems develop.

Finally the real secrets are revealed to help you get your thyroid back on track. It really is possible to start recovering your thyroid health in just a few short weeks.

Wishing you the very best of thyroid health,

Warm regards,

Louise O’Connor
Naturopath & Wellness Coach

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ABOUT LOUISE O’CONNOR

Louise O’Connor is a leading high profile Australian Naturopath & Wellness Coach with many years of experience in natural medicine. Louise has quickly established herself as an authority on natural thyroid health. Her top-selling e-books The Natural Thyroid Diet and The Thyroid Hormone Solution are breakthroughs in natural thyroid health management.

Louise O’Connor writes and educates on natural health. Louise writes for numerous websites and has been a regular contributing feature writer for Nature & Health for the last four years. Nature & Health is widely considered the best Australian natural health magazine. Louise also writes for Healthy U. This is a free magazine available across Australia from your local Healthy Life store.

LOUISE O’CONNOR – ON THE WEB

The Natural Thyroid Diet
http://www.the-natural-thyroid-diet.com/

ThyroSynergy™ Natural Thyroid Health Formula
http://thyrosynergy.com/

Natural Weight Loss Programs
http://www.natural-weightloss-programs.com/

The Thyroid Hormone Solution
http://www.natural-thyroid-advice.com/
Chapter 1: The Thyroid Rules Metabolism

I cannot over emphasise the importance of educating yourself about your own personal thyroid problem. Once you become more informed it helps you understand which tests are vital to get a real medical diagnosis and the most appropriate course of action to recover your thyroid health. So it is best not to skip this technical information.

Where Is The Thyroid Gland?
The small butterfly-shaped thyroid gland is located near the front of the throat, just below the voice box. The right and left lateral lobes lie on either side of the trachea, or ‘wind pipe’. The lobes are joined by a mass of tissue called the isthmus that lies in front of the trachea.

The thyroid is an endocrine organ that secretes critical messengers called hormones to help regulate and fire up the entire body. The connection to all aspects of health makes the thyroid a very important endocrine organ.

The thyroid gland is a highly vascular organ; this means it has a rich blood supply. In fact, the thyroid gland receives more blood per unit of weight than the kidneys. It is important to know that the thyroid cells are the only cells that absorb iodine. Uptake of iodine involves an active transport system which allows this key thyroid mineral to be absorbed at a rapid rate from the blood.

Iodine is vital for thyroid hormone production. When iodine levels are low the thyroid struggles to manufacture sufficient thyroid hormones. This makes iodine an essential nutrient for ongoing healthy thyroid activity. The body does not produce iodine so it must be obtained from the diet. An iodine deficiency usually requires supplementation. Food sources of iodine are discussed later in this e-book in Chapter 18: Targeted Nutrients For A Healthy Thyroid.

The thyroid is the body’s main storage site for iodine. To meet ongoing demand the thyroid gland traps iodine from the blood and manufactures thyroid hormones. These life-sustaining hormones are stored and released into circulation on demand.
The Thyroid: The Master Gland of Metabolism
The main job of the thyroid is to fire up metabolism. The term metabolism refers to the different processes of the body that carry on continuously ensuring your body keeps functioning in tip top shape. For example; keeping your heart beating, turning calories into energy, re-building bone and growing hair and nails.

A well functioning thyroid gland is crucial to your metabolism. The thyroid acts like a throttle, boosting your body’s metabolic activity to keep your body humming. When your thyroid is sluggish your body generates less energy and less heat. You become lethargic and suffer a lack of energy. Over time you can even lose your zest for life.

The thyroid boosts metabolism by firing up the activity of the mitochondria, the power houses contained within all cells. This is where you generate energy to ignite your metabolism.

When the thyroid gland is under performing the internal metabolic furnace is turned down. Low thyroid symptoms can be far reaching as all body systems require energy. It makes sense then that low body temperature and fatigue are two of the most common signs used to diagnose an under active thyroid.

The thyroid plays a major role in weight gain. It is definitely harder to lose weight when your thyroid is under-performing. The potential to lose weight may be blocked by slow metabolism. Boosting your metabolic rate by increasing thyroid activity may be the key to achieving and maintaining long term weight loss success.

Chapter 2: Understanding Thyroid Hormone Function
The pituitary gland is an important endocrine organ located deep within the brain. It regulates the thyroid by secreting a hormone called Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH).

TSH travels to the thyroid gland to signal production of the two main thyroid hormones – thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). The three and four indicate the number of iodine molecules contained within the hormone. The thyroid hormones then circulate within the blood, making them readily available.

Thyroid hormones must enter the cell to bind to the thyroid hormone receptors before they can trigger an effect. T4 and T3 enter the target cells by using a specific transport pathway.

A healthy thyroid produces an abundance of T4 along with smaller amounts of T3. T4 must be converted to T3 to have an effect. T3 plays a primary role in regulating metabolic activity within the body.

**T3 is needed for energy, weight loss and protects against heart palpitations.**

The conversion of T4 to T3 mainly occurs in the liver. The enzyme that converts T4 to T3 is called iodide peroxidase or 5-monodeiodinase. This specialised enzyme converts approximately 70-80% of released T4 to the biologically active T3, with the remainder converting to reverse T3. As you will read later, reverse T3 has the opposite effect of T3.

Why Diets Don't Work When You Have An Underactive Thyroid
Activity of the iodide peroxidase enzyme is inhibited in response to calorie restriction. This is the body’s natural response to conserve fuel during a time of 'famine'. Dieting or cutting calories is therefore not effective when you have an underactive thyroid. There may also be poor conversion of T4 through to T3 due to specific nutritional deficiencies associated with a restrictive diet.

**What Is The Role of TSH Releasing Hormone (TRH)?**
The pituitary gland itself is regulated by another endocrine gland known as the hypothalamus which is also located within the brain.

The hypothalamus produces **TSH Releasing Hormone (TRH)**. The role of TRH is to signal the pituitary gland to stimulate the thyroid gland by releasing TSH.

![Diagram of TSH and TRH](image)

TSH has a dual role as it also stimulates production of the **sodium-iodide symporter (NIS)**. The NIS molecule accumulates iodine in the thyroid cells and is an important step in the formation of T4 and T3. Without adequate amounts of NIS, iodine is not able to enter the thyroid cells.

The thyroid also produces the hormone **calcitonin**, which plays a role in calcium and phosphorus metabolism. Calcitonin lowers the amount of calcium and phosphate in the blood by inhibiting bone breakdown and accelerating the absorption of calcium by the bones.

**Chapter 3: Low Thyroid Warning**
Thyroid troubles are often downplayed, misunderstood and portrayed as unimportant. Many people feel downright ignored by mainstream medicine. But thyroid problems are very serious and there is little doubt thyroid problems are becoming increasingly prevalent.

Low thyroid symptoms can be complex and far reaching. Are you always tired? Gaining weight for no reason? Or finding it impossible to lose weight, even with a healthy diet and exercise? Do you feel depressed, moody and forgetful?
An under active thyroid, or **hypothyroidism** leads to inadequate thyroid hormone production. The tell-tale symptoms of hypothyroidism vary from person to person depending on the severity of the hormone deficiency. But in general, problems develop slowly over time, often over a number of years. At first you may barely notice the symptoms.

*As your metabolism continues to slow, you develop more obvious signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism.*

Women are more susceptible to low thyroid function than men as this condition is often triggered by hormonal changes at puberty, pregnancy or menopause.

**Chapter 4: Symptoms Of An Underactive Thyroid**

The thyroid is often referred to as *the body’s major metabolic regulator*. Your thyroid keeps your body humming. When your thyroid is not working properly it impacts on your whole body health.

Take a few moments to look over this list of common low thyroid symptoms;

- Lethargy or fatigue
- Depression
- Susceptibility to the cold
- Cold hands & feet
- Recurrent infections
- Thyroid gland swelling
- Sluggish memory & concentration
- Stubborn weight gain
- Dry hair, nails & skin
- Pronounced hair loss
- Thinning of the eyebrows; especially the outer third of the eyebrow
- Muscle weakness
- Joint pain
- Menstrual irregularities
- Menstrual pain
- Low libido (sex drive)
- Infertility
- Higher rate of miscarriages
- Lowered stress resistance
- Low blood pressure & heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath on exertion
- Poor lipid profile; raised total cholesterol
- Slow pulse rate (sinus bradycardia)
- Fluid retention (puffy hands/feet)
- Constipation

As you can see from this extensive list, there are a wide range of symptoms relating to low thyroid function. Not everyone has identical symptoms. You may relate to some of these or you may relate strongly to a range of these symptoms.

*A thyroid imbalance is often misdiagnosed as depression, muscle pain, PMS or simply dismissed as fatigue.*

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The key is to recognise these indicators as a fundamental problem with the body’s metabolism. The thyroid generates energy for many metabolic processes. When the thyroid is underactive metabolism slows down.

**Thyroid Cancer**

The most common sign of thyroid cancer is the development of a lump on the thyroid gland, or swelling at the front of the throat. Other symptoms can include hoarseness of the voice, difficulty swallowing and noticeable swelling of the lymph glands in the neck. You should always seek advice from your health practitioner if you have a distinct lump in your neck.

**Safeguarding Thyroid Health From Nuclear Radiation**

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake that hit the north eastern coast of the main Japanese island of Honshu near the port city of Sendai on March 11, 2011 and the subsequent tsunami will go down in history as causing one of the world’s worst nuclear disasters.

Nuclear experts say it could take many years to learn the extent of the damage from the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant meltdown on human health, food supplies and marine life.

The Japanese nuclear crisis released dangerous radioactive particles into the atmosphere. This includes radioactive iodine known as iodine-131. There is no safe dose of radioactive iodine-131. Iodine-131 is rapidly absorbed by the body and it has a half-life of eight days. This means it is only half as dangerous after 8 days. Iodine-131 only leaves the body as it decays radioactively.

The thyroid gland is at particular risk from irradiation when dangerous radioactive iodine is released into the atmosphere. The thyroid gland does not differentiate between non radioactive and radioactive iodine. The danger is greater for those who are lacking iodine. If you suffer an iodine deficiency your body will attempt to absorb hazardous radioactive iodine. The radioactive iodine then builds up in the thyroid gland. This has the serious potential to damage the thyroid gland and the long term effect of exposure is thyroid cancer.

Avoiding contact with radioactive iodine is the first step to minimising the threat of radioactive iodine on your thyroid. However exposure is largely unavoidable in view of the fact that the radioactive fallout from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power has been quickly carried world wide on the prevailing jet streams.

**The World Health Organisation (WHO) Recommendations**

In normal conditions the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends a daily iodine intake of 150 micrograms per day for adults and 250 micrograms per day for women during pregnancy.

For acute exposure to radioactive iodine in a fallout zone a higher amount of iodine is recommended. The WHO recommends a daily dose of 130milligrams for a short period of time before or at the beginning of exposure to radioactive iodine. Boosting iodine levels with a safe form of iodine helps block uptake of radioactive iodine. This acute dose is usually achieved with a liquid iodine supplement containing potassium iodide (KI). Potassium iodide is a salt of the stable form of iodine. Potassium iodide has generally been found to be safe when administered at the recommended dose. Do not use topical antiseptic iodine products such as Betadine.
Potassium iodide does not protect your body against other radioactive substances such as cesium-137. This radioactive isotope was also released into the atmosphere from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power meltdown. This toxic compound persists in the environment as it has a half life of thirty years. If you have concerns regarding the impact of radiation exposure on your health you should discuss these with your healthcare practitioner.

The events in Japan have highlighted the importance of making sure you are not iodine deficient. When you are iodine deficient it puts you at risk of absorbing harmful radioactive iodine from the environment.

Chapter 5: What is Hashimoto’s Disease?
Hashimoto’s thyroiditis is a chronic inflammatory condition affecting the thyroid. It was first described by the Japanese specialist Dr. Hashimoto Hakaru in 1912.

Hashimoto’s thyroiditis is the most common cause of hypothyroidism. It often begins with a painless, firm enlargement of the thyroid gland or a feeling of fullness in the neck. Over time the symptoms of hypothyroidism become apparent. Anxiety is common in individuals with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis and may be one of the early signs of this disease. The thyroid plays an important role in regulating your mood.

Hashimoto’s thyroiditis is termed an autoimmune disease. Autoimmune problems occur when the immune system malfunctions and the body attacks its own tissue. This autoimmune reaction associated with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis creates inflammation and, in some cases eventual destruction of the thyroid gland.

The inflammation caused by Hashimoto's disease, also known as chronic lymphocytic thyroiditis, slows thyroid function. At first you may not observe any noticeable effects, but without treatment the symptoms gradually become severe.

The standard medical treatment is thyroid hormone replacement with levothyroxine (T4). This medication requires medical supervision and should never be discontinued without medical guidance.

Mainstream medicine does not know exactly what triggers this immune attack on the thyroid. Some think a virus or bacterial infection may initiate this response, while others believe a genetic flaw may be involved.

It is likely Hashimoto's thyroiditis results form a range of factors. Autoimmune conditions are strongly linked to chemical exposure, infections, food intolerances and heavy metal toxicity.

Diagnosis
Hashimoto's thyroiditis is associated with high levels of antibodies that attack the thyroid. Therefore an assessment of specific thyroid antibodies contained within the blood is used to detect Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Abnormally raised antibody levels will confirm a diagnosis. A strong autoimmune response is indicated when there are high levels of thyroid antibodies.

Your health practitioner may request the following pathology tests; thyroglobulin antibodies (TgAb) and thyroid peroxidase antibodies (TPOAb). Most practitioners will also measure T4 and T3 and
thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) to determine how the thyroid gland is functioning. A physical examination of the thyroid region is also commonly performed.

Chapter 6: The Conventional Medical Approach

The standard medical treatment for hypothyroidism is thyroid hormone replacement. This is normally done by prescribing the drug known as levothyroxine which provides a synthetic version of thyroxine (T4).

Treatment usually begins with small doses as too much T4 can cause serious side effects. The starting dose and adjustments to the dose are done in small increments to reduce the risk of side effects. The T4 medication is gradually increased until the levels of TSH in your blood return to normal. Typically this thyroid medication is advocated for life.

Levothyroxine is commonly prescribed, even though triiodothyronine (T3) is the thyroid hormone used the cells and tissues to initiate a thyroid response. Unfortunately levothyroxine does not always ameliorate the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism. To be effective this synthetic form must readily converted through to the active T3 form.

Acute Reactions to Levothyroxine

Adverse reactions associated with levothyroxine therapy are primarily due to an overdose of the medication. Symptoms of overdose may include chest pain, pounding heartbeat, shortness of breath, tremor, leg cramps, confusion, vomiting, diarrhoea or seizures. These are the type of symptoms you would normally expect if you had hyperthyroidism.

A rigorous scientific review published by The Cochrane Library concluded that sodium levothyroxine is not significantly effective in improving the symptoms associated with hypothyroidism. Sodium levothyroxine may help correct serum TSH but rarely provides enough T3 to completely relieve your symptoms.

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It is common for thyroid sufferers to spiral steadily downward feeling worse as the years go by. You may think that advances in thyroid treatment need to be high-tech and expensive. There is another way. Low-tech, low-cost interventions such as nutrition, exercise and reducing stress can make a difference. In fact, optimal thyroid function is unlikely without this approach.

Improving whole body health helps balance natural thyroid function.

It is important to identify and treat the underlying causes of poor thyroid health. The conventional medical approach typically views the thyroid in isolation from other systems of the body. Improving whole body health can go a long way to balance natural thyroid function.

It is possible for your thyroid to improve or even recover with the right diet and lifestyle interventions but your thyroid cannot do it alone. Thyroid health depends on restoring function to all major body systems and eliminating the factors that cause a thyroid imbalance.

Levothyroxine Can Contribute To Poor Bone Health

One of the main long term health issues with taking T4 or levothyroxine is the potential for this drug to accelerate bone loss. Studies confirm that long term levothyroxine therapy is associated with decreasing bone density which can lead to osteoporosis.2

The silent disease of osteoporosis often goes unnoticed until a bone is broken. But it is never too late to preserve bone strength as bone is a highly dynamic, living tissue. Health experts agree that choosing a healthy balanced diet and engaging in regular weight bearing exercise can ensure a lifetime of good bone health.

When it comes to building bone health the nutrient that first springs to mind is calcium. It is the most abundant mineral within the body. But building your bone health may involve much more than popping a calcium supplement or eating more dairy foods. There is a critical nutritional factor that may have greater benefits to rival even the best calcium products. It is the acid-alkaline balance of the body.

Some bone experts argue that osteoporosis is strongly linked to an acid-forming diet. The typical Western diet is high in acid-forming foods such as meat, sugar and white flour products. Low-acid eating with The Natural Thyroid Diet will benefit bone health and decrease your risk of osteoporosis.

Bones adapt to physical stress; the more you use them the stronger they become. Physical activity such as walking, cycling, swimming, weight training, yoga or pilates will keep your bones in good shape.

**Menopause & Bone Loss**

Women usually achieve ‘peak bone mass’, the state of maximum bone density at around 25 to 30 years of age. This is when bones are at their strongest. Women are particularly susceptible to significant bone loss after they reach peak bone mass as the hormones oestrogens and progesterone play a dual role in maintaining bone density. While the loss of some bone density is normal with ageing, combating bone loss is a constant challenge after the transition into menopause.

Hormone Replacement Therapy is often touted to treat menopausal bone loss. I do not advocate turning to HRT given the demonstrated risks.2 It is important to remember that hormones have a natural cycle and the body can adapt when positive steps are taken to support this transition. Natural remedies such as herbal phytoestrogens can assist in gently restoring hormonal balance. Black Cohosh (Cimicifuga racemosa), Wild Yam (Dioscorea villosa) and Red Clover (Trifolium pratense) are prized herbs to support declining hormone levels during menopause.

Note: If you are taking thyroid medications make sure you read the Chapter 18: Targeted Nutrients For a Healthy Thyroid. This information will help improve your ability to activate synthetic T4 to T3.

Sodium levothyroxine medication is typically advocated for life. This medication requires medical supervision. Never discontinue your medication without medical guidance.

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You should also check to see if other medications that you are taking will decrease levothyroxine absorption. For example, antacids can bind and delay absorption if taken within four hours of the thyroid medication.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT)

Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) is the use of supplemental doses of hormones with a chemical structure identical to those naturally produced in the body. BHRT allows for an individual prescription of different concentrations of the major hormones, including the thyroid hormones. Not all doctors prescribe BHRT. You may have to seek out a doctor specialising in this field.

Ideally, thyroid hormone replacement therapy is best done with a prescription that contains both T4 and T3 or active T3. Armour Thyroid® extract is the most widely available thyroid preparation that contains both T4 and T3.

Your doctor may also recommend a single T3 preparation to improve thyroid function. For example, slow release T3 is often prescribed to improve cellular metabolism or to counter the effects of high reverse T3. It may take a series of small steps to get your thyroid hormones adjusted to where they should be. Do not assume that more is better. Small amounts of supplemental T3 and T4 work well.

Along with improvements in diet and lifestyle factors, the overall goal of BHRT is to alleviate symptoms and enhance the function of your thyroid. It can take 6-12 months to see improvements in severe cases.

Chapter 7: Get A Real Medical Diagnosis

An under active thyroid, or hypothyroidism can cause symptoms ranging from a mild deficiency state which is barely detectable with standard thyroid blood tests to a severe thyroid problem. Even minor changes in thyroid function have a dramatic effect on your overall health.

Controversy surrounds testing and the clinical definition of hypothyroidism. Subclinical thyroid dysfunction is defined as an ‘abnormal TSH level and free T4 and T3 levels within their reference ranges’. This is a narrow medical guideline used to define a thyroid condition.

Do you think you may have an undiagnosed thyroid problem? It is vital to get a proper medical diagnosis. If left unchecked a thyroid problem causes weight gain and increases the likelihood of you developing cardiovascular problems, depression and anxiety.

There are three ways to diagnose a problem with your thyroid: review the symptom list, undertake laboratory tests with your health practitioner and assess your basal body temperature. A brachioradialis reflexometry test may also be useful.

Thyroid Lab Tests

The 'gold standard' test for hypothyroidism is to measure the blood level of TSH, the messenger hormone that sends the signal to the thyroid to produce more thyroid hormones.

Often this single TSH test is done to see if further thyroid tests are warranted. This can waste your time. If you suspect you have a sluggish or under active thyroid you need to test all the major thyroid hormones straight away.
A single TSH test is simply not enough.

If your doctor only wants to test TSH or your doctor tells you your thyroid is OK after only checking TSH, find a doctor who will do a thorough assessment of your thyroid hormones.

It is vital to determine if the thyroid is manufacturing T4 and that the T4 is converting through to active T3. You need to assess free T3 and free T4.

Free T3 is the best clue to how your thyroid is working.

Most of the thyroid hormones circulating in the blood are bound to transport proteins. Only small amounts are free and biologically active, therefore measuring the concentration of free thyroid hormones is of greater diagnostic value.

A special test that specifically measures reverse T3 (rT3) should be requested to exclude reverse T3 dominance. In addition, thyroid antibody testing should be performed to rule out an autoimmune disease.

Raised antibodies are a sensitive marker for autoimmune conditions such as Graves’ disease, which is strongly linked to a hyperactive thyroid state or Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, the primary cause of hypothyroidism.

A proper medical diagnosis can only be achieved by performing a thyroid screening test of TSH, free T4, free T3, thyroid antibodies and rT3.

Thyroid Function & Healthy Ageing

Thyroid dysfunction in older people is a relatively frequent disorder. Older individuals may display symptoms such as weakness, confusion, dry skin, joint stiffness, muscle pain and a reduced tolerance to the cold. These symptoms can be subtle and may be regarded as a consequence of ageing and overlooked as being caused by hypothyroidism.

A complete thyroid screening test is vital. In fact, this test should be done regularly in all people aged over 65 years. TSH, free T4, free T3 and thyroid antibodies should be assessed regularly.

Chapter 8: The Real Problem With Blood Tests

Evaluating thyroid health using blood tests does not always yield a definitive diagnosis. It is well accepted that TSH, T4 and T3 tests are not overly sensitive. To add to this, TSH and thyroid hormone levels vary throughout the day and from day-to-day. Taking a thyroid test one day could yield different results the next day.

If you have borderline hypothyroidism the testing does not always diagnose a potential problem. The wide reference ranges make it hard to diagnosis small variations in your hormone levels. Your thyroid hormone levels may fall within the so called ‘normal range’ but you are definitely experiencing low thyroid symptoms. You could be then told you are experiencing sub-clinical hypothyroidism.

The term ‘sub-clinical’ can simply mean that your
thyroid problems are being ignored

It is very important not to rely solely on pathology tests alone to diagnose a thyroid problem. Consider any symptoms of hypothyroidism along with the blood test results.

Chapter 9: What The Thyroid Tests Mean

What do they all mean? Labs provide health practitioners with reference ranges that are derived from average values in the whole population. Having a result in the reference range therefore does not always prove a healthy thyroid state.

The standard references listed here are used by Australian pathology labs. The ideal reference range has been included. These numbers have been developed from my clinical experience. You will not find these numbers in standard medical text and some doctors may argue against using such a narrow range.

If you are outside of Australia you will have different reference ranges. Check your pathology report to help you interpret your thyroid test results.

- **Thyroid Stimulating Hormone**: Normal range 0.4-5.0 mIU/L. Ideal < 1.5
- **Free T4**: Normal range 10 - 25 pmol/L. Ideal 14-20.
- **Free T3**: Normal range 4.0 – 8.00 pmol/L. Ideal 4.5-6.5
- **Reverse T3 (rT3)**: Normal/ideal range 170-450. High levels of reverse T3 are clearly evident.
- **Thyroid Antibodies**: raised thyroglobulin antibodies (TgAb), thyroid peroxidase antibodies (TPOAb) and TSH receptor antibodies (TRAb) indicate an autoimmune problem. The TRAb test is usually done if you are showing signs of an over active thyroid. High levels of antibodies are clearly evident, indicating an autoimmune condition. The antibodies will be well above range if you have an active autoimmune response going on in your body. Antibodies attack the thyroid causing inflammation and impaired function.

Follow up tests at three or six monthly intervals are usually sufficient to assess how your thyroid is improving. By treating your thyroid the symptoms will improve over time. Your symptoms are usually the best indication of how well your thyroid is recovering.

CASE STUDY
Christine, aged 55 years.
Christine first attended my clinic as she was having problems losing weight. She ate well and exercised regularly. From her medical history I suspected a thyroid problem. She went to her local doctor with instructions to ask for an assessment of; TSH, free T4, free T3, thyroid antibodies, a full blood count, blood sugar levels (BSL), liver function test (LFT) and a cholesterol study.
At her next visit we reviewed the pathology results. Total cholesterol was raised along with an unhealthy ratio of HDL and LDL ratios. Some of the liver enzymes were also raised. This is common in thyroid conditions. Christine’s TSH was 6.6 (high) and free T4 was 10.2 (low). The T3 and thyroid antibodies were not done. The raised TSH indicated a problem with the thyroid. (A high TSH reading means that the pituitary is working hard to get the thyroid into action).

Without the T3 it was impossible to evaluate if T4 was converting to T3. The thyroid antibodies should have been done to rule out Hashimoto’s disease.

Christine returned to her doctor to insist on a complete battery of thyroid tests. She requested that all the listed tests be done. Her results for the second blood tests were; TSH 6.22 (high), T4 8.9 (low), T3 3.8 (low), thyroglobulin antibodies (TgAb) 63 (range < 40), thyroid peroxidase antibodies (TPOAb) 2577 (range <34).

The antibodies were extremely high, indicating an autoimmune condition. Her doctor diagnosed Hashimoto’s after seeing these test results. Christine’s story highlights the importance of seeking a proper medical diagnosis.

Chapter 10: Is It Thyroid Hormone Resistance?

Many individuals exhibiting the classic symptoms of hypothyroidism such as low body temperature, fatigue and depression are discouraged when they are told that their thyroid hormone levels are within the normal range. However this situation could be due to ‘thyroid hormone resistance’. The question of whether you might be resistant to your own thyroid hormones is rarely considered.

The blood levels of thyroid hormones may not reflect what is happening at the cellular level. Normally the thyroid hormones attach to the T3 receptor, or the ‘docking station’ in the cell to stimulate an effect.

In ‘thyroid hormone resistance’, the thyroid hormones are prevented from activating the T3 receptors. That is, your thyroid may be producing adequate thyroid hormones but they are unable to activate a cellular response.

One of the most common reasons for this is that toxic compounds occupy the cell receptors preventing the hormones from binding with them. Do you suspect environmental chemicals are sabotaging your thyroid health? The Natural Thyroid Diet will assist in lightening the toxic load on your body.

Chapter 11: What is Reverse T3 Dominance?

While hypothyroidism is becoming more widely accepted, Reverse T3 Dominance is often overlooked. Reverse T3 dominance, sometimes referred to as Wilson’s Syndrome is a common hypothyroid condition.

Under normal conditions T4 will convert to both T3 and rT3, with the body quickly eliminating rT3. Reverse T3 dominance occurs when greater amounts of T4 are converted to rT3, the inactive form of T3.

When T4 converts to rT3 it leads to all the typical symptoms of hypothyroidism.
Every cell in the body has a T3 receptor. The problem is, rT3 has a similar molecular structure to T3 and therefore fits into the receptor upside down. This blocks the active T3 from binding to the receptor site and activating a healthy thyroid response.

Testing For Reverse T3 (rT3)
Most of the biological effects generated by your thyroid are due to the activity of T3. T3 has a high affinity for the thyroid receptors. Reverse T3 Dominance can be difficult to diagnose as low thyroid symptoms exist, but the free T3 levels can be within normal limits. These results can give a false impression of true thyroid function.

*A separate measurement of rT3 must be performed to identify *Reverse T3 Dominance.*

If rT3 is blocking the action of T3 you will experience the effects of low thyroid function. Some internet sites propose that a measurement of T3 includes a portion of rT3. This is not the case with Australian pathology labs.

**CASE STUDY**
Lisa, aged 40 years.
Lisa attended my clinic as she was experiencing extreme fatigue and low blood pressure. She had a busy corporate career and was finding it hard to keep up with the demands of her job. A full medical history was taken. Also an assessment of blood pressure and pulse rate was performed. It appeared Lisa was experiencing sinus bradycardia, an abnormally slow heart rate. This condition is often related to low thyroid function. She was showing other signs of poor thyroid function so a test of her thyroid was requested along with an electrocardiography (ECG). Sinus bradycardia was confirmed via
the ECG test. (Her resting heart rate was less than 60 beats per minute). Her pathology results showed TSH, T4, T3 and thyroid antibodies were all within range.

Lisa's rT3 came back at 705 (range: 170-450). This is an unusually high level of rT3. Evaluating rT3 was invaluable as it allowed a diagnosis of low thyroid function due to Reverse T3 Dominance.

**Treating Reverse T3 Dominance**

Treatment of this hypothyroid disorder usually involves a medical doctor prescribing a *single T3* preparation. Synthetic T4 (levothyroxine) or Armour Thyroid®, which contains a mixture of T4 and T3 may not be appropriate for this condition. It is highly likely that a portion of the supplemented T4 will be shunted towards greater production of rT3, allowing this problem to continue.

Switching to a single T3 preparation can slowly bring down reverse T3. It usually takes around 12 weeks for the body to eliminate the elevated reverse T3.

Treating the cause is also critical - why is so much rT3 is being produced? High levels of stress, adrenal fatigue and toxicity are the major culprits in the development of reverse T3 dominance. Treatment is more effective when all aspects of health are addressed. Reducing stress and a natural thyroid diet strengthens whole body health.

**Chapter 12: The Clinical Indicators of Hypothyroidism**

Blood tests are not always enough to diagnose a thyroid problem. For this reason, your health practitioner will also discuss the clinical signs & symptoms of low thyroid function.

The common signs and symptoms could include dry skin, hair loss, low libido, unexplained fatigue, rapid weight gain, menstrual irregularities, mood changes, heart palpitations, joint pain or muscle weakness.

They may also perform a physical examination of your throat and request a visual assessment of the thyroid gland. This is usually done with an ultrasound, which checks for thyroid nodules. Thermography imaging (thermal imaging) may also be used.

**Thyroid Nodules**

A thyroid nodule is a lump in or on the thyroid gland. Thyroid nodules are common and it is possible for more than one nodule to develop. Any time a lump is discovered in thyroid tissue the possibility of malignancy (cancer) must be considered. Fortunately, the *vast majority of thyroid nodules are benign* (non-cancerous).

Many patients with thyroid nodules have no symptoms whatsoever and are found by chance on a routine physical exam or imaging study. Some individuals may become aware of a gradually enlarging lump at the front of the neck and may experience a vague pressure sensation or discomfort when swallowing. If you notice a lump or changes to the shape of your thyroid gland you should bring this to the attention of your health practitioner immediately.

Nodules can be caused by a simple overgrowth of normal thyroid tissue, fluid-filled cysts, inflammation (thyroiditis) or a tumor (benign or cancerous). Nodules are not routinely removed as they are often found to be benign. Endocrinologists rely heavily on three specialised tests in deciding
which nodules should be treated surgically; thyroid fine needle biopsy, thyroid scan and thyroid ultrasonography.

A thyroid fine needle biopsy is used to gather a sample of the tissue contained within the nodule. This procedure can be performed in a doctor’s office. A thyroid ultrasonography is used to guide the placement of a biopsy needle to decrease the frequency of inadequate specimens.

A thyroid scan is a picture of the thyroid gland taken after a small dose of a radioactive isotope has been injected or swallowed. The scan tells whether the nodule is hyper functioning (‘hot’ nodule), functioning along with the rest of the thyroid gland (‘warm’ nodule), or not functioning (‘cold’ nodule). Thyroid cancer is rarely found in hot nodules, so a scan showing a hot nodule eliminates the need for fine needle biopsy. If a hot nodule causes hyperthyroidism, it is treated with radioiodine or surgery.

Chapter 13: Basal Body Temperature Testing

Your basal or base temperature while resting reflects your metabolic rate which is largely determined by the activity of your thyroid gland. A low body temperature often indicates sluggish metabolism, often a direct result of poor thyroid function.

Basal body temperature testing is a very simple test that can be performed at home. It is one of the best ways to assess your thyroid making this an accurate and affordable method of assessing thyroid health.

Your body works best within a very narrow temperature range. The catalytic enzymes, hormones and vitamins and minerals work best at 97.8 – 99.8 degrees Fahrenheit or 36.5 – 37.5 degrees Celsius. Being cold indicates you are experiencing less biological activity. Your body is not performing well enough to raise the body’s core temperature to a normal functioning level.

Procedure for Basal Temperature Testing

All that is required to do this testing is a good quality thermometer.

The temperature is taken at rest – preferably first thing in the morning before rising over 10 days;

- Place a digital thermometer by your bed before going to sleep at night
- On waking, place the thermometer in your mouth. It is important to make as little movement as possible. Lying and resting with your eyes closed is best. Do not get up until you have completed the test.
- Read and record the temperature and date.

Perform this test on at least five mornings, preferably at the same time of day. Menstruating women must avoid doing this test around the middle of their cycle as body temperature naturally rises at ovulation. Perform this test on at least five mornings, preferably at the same time of day. Menstruating women must avoid doing this test around the middle of their cycle as body temperature naturally rises at ovulation. Men and non-menstruating women can perform the test at any time.

Your basal body temperature should be between 97.6 - 98.2 Fahrenheit (98 Fahrenheit is ideal) or 36 - 37 Celsius (36.5 Celsius is ideal).
**Low body temperature is a strong predictor of low thyroid function.**

Low waking temperatures should not be used as a stand alone diagnostic method. Your basal temperature readings should be considered along with other indicators of low thyroid function. It’s best to discuss your thyroid health with your healthcare practitioner.

**Brachioradialis Reflexometry Testing**

A specialised test can be performed by tapping a muscle in your arm (the brachioradialis muscle) and recording the reflex. From this a computer program is used to assess how well the thyroid is functioning. The test is known as ThryoFlex™. Check if there are health practitioners in your local area offering this test.

**Chapter 14: Take Heart Health Seriously**

If you feel breathless, and notice your heart beat is sometimes irregular you could have low blood pressure (BP). Hypothyroidism is often associated with both low BP and a low pulse rate. Ask your health practitioner to check your BP and pulse rate.

Sinus bradycardia is common in hypothyroidism. This condition arises when the heart beats more slowly than usual. It is defined as a resting heart rate of 60 beats per minute or less. In simple terms you could say the ‘brakes are on the heart’.

An accurate diagnosis of sinus bradycardia is usually made by using an electrocardiography (ECG). This will also rule out a possible problem with your actual heart. The reduced ability of the heart to pump blood efficiently puts more strain on your heart. To overcome both low blood pressure and sinus bradycardia it is very important to heal your thyroid.

If you have a problem with blood pressure, you should also request a cholesterol panel along with homocysteine. People with low thyroid function tend to have raised cholesterol and high levels of homocysteine. Too much homocysteine is an independent risk factor for heart disease. Vitamin B12, B6 and folic acid go hand-in-hand to help keep homocysteine levels down.

**Chapter 15: Hypothyroidism & Mood Disorders**

Thyroid problems are often misdiagnosed as mood disorders such as depression or anxiety. Low thyroid function is linked to mood changes and emotional issues are likely to improve by treating the underlying thyroid condition.

One explanation for the link between hypothyroidism and mood disorders is the influence of T3 on brain activity. T3 is found in particularly large quantities in the area of the brain that controls emotions such as joy, anger and fear.

Biologically active T3 regulates the action of certain ‘feel good’ brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. These brain chemicals rule your mood and emotions. When T3 is low, or the action of this thyroid hormone is blocked, the entire cascade of brain chemicals may be affected.

The key neurotransmitters that regulate mood and emotional wellbeing are serotonin, noradrenaline and GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid). Serotonin and noradrenaline are your ‘happy’ chemical messengers. While GABA is considered a ‘calming’ chemical messenger.

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A range of nutrients are required to build key neurotransmitters and thyroid hormones to help regulate your mood. Choosing a nutritious, vital diet that is as close to nature as possible is a critical step to re-balancing your emotional wellbeing.

Apart from dietary influences, another issue to consider is the impact of prescription drugs. For example anti-depressants may lower thyroid hormone levels and lithium used in bi-polar disorders can block the production of thyroid hormones.

**Chapter 16: Hair Loss & Its Causes**

Are you worried about the amount of hair you are losing? Hair loss is one of the most common and distressing signs of a thyroid problem. The medical term for excessive hair loss is alopecia (al-oh-PEE-shah).

Hair loss associated with hypothyroidism usually causes overall hair thinning, not bald patches. You may notice that handfuls of hair come out when combing or washing your hair, or may fall out after gentle tugging.

Hair health is very much dependent on an ample supply of thyroid hormones. The thyroid hormones directly affect the hair follicles to help generate new hair growth. Decreased metabolism or energy production within the hair follicle leads to the early release of the hair at the root. You see it as too much hair falling out.

A ground breaking study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism showed that T4 has a direct effect on the proliferation of the cells responsible for hair growth and the length of time hair grows.3

In addition, both T4 and T3 stimulate melanin synthesis. Melanin gives pigment or colour to your hair. Early greying of your hair can also be a symptom of hypothyroidism. This important study provides evidence that human hair follicles are direct targets of thyroid hormones.

It is not too late to halt hair loss. As your thyroid recovers you will notice less hair loss. Both the appearance and growth of your hair will improve. But keep in mind new hair can take months before it really gets going. The important first step is to stop your hair falling out.

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Chapter 17: What Causes a Thyroid Problem?

Anyone can develop hypothyroidism but for women the risk is even higher especially after the age of 40. These are the main triggers that put you at risk of developing a thyroid problem:

- Obesity
- Nutrient deficiencies; especially low iodine
- Thyroid disrupting chemicals; due to environmental exposure
- Thyroid damaging foods
- High levels of stress
- Adrenal fatigue
- Genetic susceptibility (family history)
- Autoimmune disorders; the immune system attacks the thyroid tissue
- Hormone imbalances; especially high levels of circulating estrogens
- Infections
- Poor liver function
- Food intolerances & a ‘leaky gut’ (gut permeability)
- Surgical removal of the thyroid gland
- Physical trauma to the thyroid gland
- Root canal treatment. Root filled teeth can become a haven for pathological bacteria that enter systemic circulation and eventually find their way to the thyroid.
- Exposure to electromagnetic radiation

Being overweight is a significant risk factor for developing hypothyroidism. As obesity rates rise it seems likely that the incidence of hypothyroidism will continue to increase.

Chapter 18: Targeted Nutrients for a Healthy Thyroid

Healthy thyroid activity depends on a range of key nutrients. The chief nutritional factors include:

- Iodine
- Selenium
- Zinc
- B vitamins
- Essential fatty acids (good fats)

These nutrients keep your thyroid humming, setting the pace for ongoing thyroid activity. Choosing the foods containing a wide array of these vital nutrients will support life-long thyroid health.

As most people find it difficult to optimise nutritional intake through diet alone specific natural thyroid health supplements are also advocated. These are my general nutritional recommendations. Please note you should always consult your qualified health practitioner regarding your specific health issues.

Iodine: A Mighty Mineral For The Thyroid

Iodine is important for normal functioning of the thyroid gland as it is an essential nutrient required for the synthesis of the thyroid hormones; triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4). Low dietary intake is emerging as a widespread issue in developed countries. When iodine stores are low the thyroid cannot maintain adequate thyroid hormone levels.
The thyroid gland has the largest concentration of iodine in the body. The thyroid gland traps iodine from the blood and manufactures the thyroid hormones which are released into circulation on demand.

Adequate iodine levels are also critical during pregnancy and breast feeding. Iodine is an important 'brain nutrient' to aid normal development of the baby's brain.

**What is Goitre?**
The amount of iodine in food or water depends upon the amount of iodine in the local soil. The older an exposed soil surface, the more likely the iodine has been leached away by erosion. Low iodine levels lead to enlargement of the thyroid as this gland attempts to trap more iodine from the blood supply. An enlarged thyroid, known as goitre is one of the earliest and most visible signs of an iodine deficiency.

**The Best Sources of Iodine**
Most of the earth's iodine is found in the oceans. This trace mineral is therefore found widely in seafood and sea vegetables. This includes bladderwrack, arame, hijiki, nori, wakame & kombu. These are the types of seaweeds used commonly in Japanese cooking.

Iodine added to table salt has poor bioavailability so the body does not fully absorb it. In fact, refined table salt is a lifeless food product that contains harmful amounts of aluminum. Therefore, avoid using refined white table salt. A natural sea salt is a better option. However check the source is not from contaminated sources.

Iodine supplementation is effective to treat an iodine deficiency. Supplemental iodine is found in three main forms: potassium iodide, ammonium iodide or is standardised from a *Fucus vesiculosus* (Bladderwrack) herbal extract. Iodine is also found in combination nutritional products such as a multivitamin-mineral or thyroid health supplements.

**Iosol iodine** contains ammonium iodide which has increased bioavailability. It is different to potassium iodide which can over-ride the uptake control mechanisms of the body. In fact, potassium iodide has been shown to congest the thyroid gland when taken in high doses. Iosol is a water soluble form that readily disassociates to release free iodine for the body to use as needed.

**Bladderwrack** (*Fucus vesiculosus*) is a prized seaweed species traditionally used in Western herbal medicine as a thyroid tonic.

- Bladderwrack contains trace minerals, particularly iodine. Bladderwrack may assist healthy production of thyroid hormones due to its rich content of iodine
- This specialised seaweed also contains polysaccharides of several types including alginic acid and fucans such as fucoidan. Researchers believe fucoidans may be partly responsible for the enhanced longevity observed in Japanese populations where seaweeds form a significant part of the daily diet.
- A reputable Bladderwrack supplement lists the botanical name *Fucus vesiculosus* on the label.

**Testing Iodine Levels**
The iodine loading test is considered the gold standard to identifying an iodine deficiency. To begin
with a urine sample is collected to establish a baseline level of iodine in the body. This is followed by supplementation with 50mg of an iodine/iodide combination and subsequent 24-hour collections of urine. These samples are then sent to a lab for analysis.

The principle of an iodine loading test is really quite simple; if your body has adequate iodine most of the iodine consumed during the test will be excreted in the urine. If your body is deficient a significant portion will be retained. Speak to your health practitioner about this iodine loading test.

**Selenium**

Selenium is required for normal thyroid hormone synthesis, activation and metabolism. One important enzyme pathway relating to thyroid activity is activated by the iodide peroxidase enzyme. It plays a role in thyroid hormone metabolism by assisting conversion of thyroxine (T4) to triiodothyronine (T3). The iodide peroxidase enzyme is reliant on adequate selenium to work effectively and thereby regulates the concentrations of T3.

Selenium also supports the body’s antioxidant defence systems to protect the thyroid gland. Research demonstrates selenium is critical in inflammatory thyroid disorders. In areas with severe selenium deficiency there is a higher incidence of autoimmune thyroid disorders due to decreased activity of selenium dependent enzymes within the thyroid cells. Even a mild selenium deficiency can contribute to the development of autoimmune thyroid diseases.

A plentiful supply of selenium is found in Brazil nuts and to a lesser extent shellfish, tuna and salmon. When supplementing selenium it is important not to take excessive amounts as it does build up in the body. A daily limit of 300-400mcg from all sources should not be exceeded.

**Zinc**

Zinc is an essential mineral that assists healthy thyroid activity. Zinc is required for conversion of thyroid hormones T3 to T4. A daily intake of zinc is required to meet ongoing demand as the body has no specialised zinc storage system. To maintain zinc levels it is best to avoid supplements high in copper as this mineral quickly depletes zinc stores. Foods such as grains and soy contain phytates which also decrease zinc absorption in the body.

Zinc is usually high in seafood (especially oysters), beef, oatmeal, chicken, spinach, nuts and seeds.

**B Vitamins**

Stress depletes a wide variety of nutrients required to support health, including the B group vitamins. These vitamins may be beneficial to aid the body during times of stress. Each B vitamin has a unique structure and performs specialised functions within the body.

- The B vitamins are water soluble vitamins. They are required as cofactors for enzymes essential in cell function and energy production.
- Vitamin B5 plays an important role in adrenal function. As Vitamin B5 is essential for adrenal function it is often used together with other B vitamins during times of stress.
- Vitamin B6 works alongside zinc to help maintain a healthy emotional state. Most B complex nutritional supplements contain the standard form of vitamin B6 known as pyridoxine.

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hydrochloride. In order for pyridoxine hydrochloride to be used by the body it must first be converted to pyridoxal 5-phosphate (P5P), the active form of B6. P5P is a necessary cofactor for the formation of several important neurotransmitters associated with stress.

- Folic acid is the form of folate most commonly added to B group supplements. However folic acid must be converted to the active form to make it usable by the body. Calcium folinate is a source of folinic acid, the metabolically active form of folic acid.
- Folinic acid appears is a more metabolically active form of folate. Some individuals may have an impaired ability to activate folic acid to the active form. Folinic acid may therefore be a preferable supplement form.
- Vitamin B6, vitamin B12 and folinic acid work in tandem to keep homocysteine (ho-mo-sist-een) in check. A high level of this harmful amino acid is associated with cardiovascular disease, depression and anxiety.

B vitamins are found in a wide range of whole, unprocessed foods.

**Omega 3 & Omega 6 Oils: The Healthy Oils**

Without doubt you need fat in your diet. However it is wise to make sure you are consuming healthy fats. The best sources are listed later in Food Selection List 6: Fats & Oils. Beneficial fats are important structural components of thyroid cell membranes and assist the action of the thyroid cell receptors. In contrast, excessive amounts of harmful, manufactured fats in the diet will block thyroid receptor activity. It is possible to supplement your diet with fish oils, or consider flax seed oil if you are a vegetarian.

The most damaging dietary oils are soy oil and canola oil. These are often described as ‘vegetable oils’ on food labels. This gives the impression they are healthy oils. This is very misleading to consumers. These oils should be avoided. Check food labels closely for these thyroid damaging oils. They are often added to bread, biscuits, pastry products and snack foods. They are also found in the cooking oil section of supermarkets.

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Visit the [Natural Weight Loss Programs supplement page](http://www.thenaturalthyroiddiet.com) for more information on nutritional supplements to support thyroid health.

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**Note:** You should always consult your qualified health practitioner regarding your personal health issues. Most nutritional and herbal preparations have not been thoroughly tested for interactions with medications. If you have a medical condition, or are taking other drugs, herbs or supplements you should speak with a qualified health practitioner before starting a new therapy. Some natural supplements are not recommended during pregnancy or breast feeding due to a lack of scientific investigations. Consult a health practitioner immediately if you experience any possible side effects to a natural supplement you are taking.
Chapter 19: The Estrogen Excess Connection

Women are all too aware of how hormones affect mood and energy. Estrogen is the most powerful female hormone. It is essential for healthy female reproductive function, playing a key role in determining a woman’s health and vitality at different life stages. From early childhood development through to puberty, followed by the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, childbirth and finally through the menopausal years.

Estrogen is produced primarily by the ovaries. To be more precise, estrogen is not a single hormone, it is a collective term for estradiol (E2), estrone (E1) and estriol (E3). Estradiol is the most potent and longer acting estrogen. The family of estrogens is balanced by progesterone which is the secondary female steroid hormone. Progesterone helps balance the effects of estrogens.

Too Much Estrogen Interferes with Thyroid Function

Excess estrogen leads to over production of thyroid binding globulin (TBG) by the liver. If TBG levels are elevated a greater portion of thyroid hormones are bound. This reduces the amount of thyroid hormones available to the body. Although the thyroid hormones are present in the blood they are not available to taken up by the cells.

Too much estrogen, or estrogen dominance often leads to thyroid problems in women. This is another reason why blood tests reveal ‘normal’ levels of thyroid hormones but the symptoms of hypothyroidism are present.

Could It Be Estrogen Dominance?

For **women**, the common symptoms of estrogen excess include;

- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Mood swings & irritability
- Memory loss and ‘fuzzy thinking’
- Early puberty/late menopause
- Irregular or absent menstruation
- Unusually heavy or longer lasting menstruation
- Menstrual cramps
- Cyclical migraine headaches
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Weight gain
- Infertility & miscarriage
- Fibrocystic breasts
- Uterine fibroids
- Endometriosis

For **men**, the common symptoms of estrogen excess include;

- Muscle loss
- Weight gain
- Softer erections or impotency
- Low sex drive

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- Emotional outbursts & irritability
- Memory loss and ‘fuzzy thinking’
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Infertility

**Testing Your Hormone Levels**
For women it is best to assess your hormones using a **hormone saliva test**. You should check the three forms of estrogen; estradiol, estriol and estrone along with progesterone. There is only one form of progesterone.

A saliva hormone test provides a very clear picture of the bioavailable hormones that are active in your body. This will quickly identify a hormonal imbalance.

Menstruating women should do their hormone test at the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle. The luteal phase is day 19, 20 or 21 of your cycle. Count forward from day 1 when menstruation commences. If you are post-menopausal or are not currently menstruating you can perform the test on any day.

Men should check **free testosterone** and **estradiol** levels along with sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG). This can be done via a simple blood test with your doctor.

**Xenoestrogens Contribute To Estrogen Overload**
Xenoestrogens are chemicals that have a powerful estrogenic effect on the body. They are fat soluble, non-biodegradable and dangerously toxic. Xenoestrogens include a wide range of substances, both natural and man-made.

Pharmaceuticals, the ‘pill’, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), dioxin and dioxin-like compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls, pesticides and plasticisers such as bisphenol A all adversely affect the reproductive system.

Xenoestrogens can be found in many everyday products such as plastic containers, metal food cans, detergents, flame retardants, food, toys, cosmetics and pesticides. Extremely damaging pesticides can be found in imported crops and foods as some developing countries use prohibited pesticides.

**Estrogen Alert For Women**
The major source of estrogen for many women is from either the oral contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy (HRT). If a woman makes 1 unit of estrogen per day, the estimated daily dose of active estrogen from the contraceptive pill is 16,675 units and HRT is 3,350.⁵ This is a dangerous level of exposure to synthetic estrogens, possibly over many years.

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Chapter 20: The Thyroid-Adrenal Crisis

The thyroid has a powerful influence over the endocrine system as it works closely with all the other glands within this network. This includes the pineal, pituitary, thymus, pancreas, adrenals and the ovaries in women and testes in men.

The adrenal glands sit on top of each of kidney. The main job of the adrenals is to help your body deal with stress. There is no doubt the thyroid and adrenal glands are inextricably linked. Prolonged stress not only zaps the thyroid, the small adrenal glands also suffer. It is very common for individuals suffering a thyroid disorder to also suffer co-existing adrenal fatigue.

Could It Also Be Adrenal Fatigue?

Do you ever ask yourself...why do I feel so drained all the time? Why do I struggle through the day? Why does the slightest bit of over exertion leave me feeling flat and worn out? Work pressures, illness, emotional conflicts, environmental stress and simply trying to squeeze more into less time eventually depletes and weakens the adrenals.

When adrenal reserves become depleted it is common to experience lethargy, chronic fatigue and feelings of being overwhelmed by life. These primary symptoms of adrenal fatigue closely resemble the symptoms of a sluggish thyroid. In fact, the indicators of adrenal fatigue are sometimes misdiagnosed entirely as hypothyroidism.

Thyroid health is weakened by stress. When the adrenal glands can no longer deal with stress effectively the thyroid gland attempts to compensate for this breakdown. The thyroid is forced to work harder to cope with declining adrenal function. But the thyroid is often already over taxed and cannot provide the support the adrenals require. Often the first warning sign of an adrenal-thyroid crisis is a noticeably decreased ability to deal with stressful situations.

It is very difficult to successfully treat thyroid imbalance if the underlying adrenal weakness is not addressed. The Natural Thyroid Diet helps strengthen and support your adrenals. In addition, natural strategies to aid recovery from adrenal fatigue are covered in the bonus e-book you received with The Natural Thyroid Diet. Please read your copy of Adrenal Fatigue & Your Thyroid to learn more.

Chapter 21: Does Soy Harm The Thyroid?

In Asia, small quantities of whole bean soy products are eaten as traditional foods. This includes tofu, natto, miso, tempeh, and boiled soy beans (edamame). These foods are fermented using traditional techniques. Fermenting soybeans makes an otherwise inedible food quite nutritious. In contrast Western societies are now consuming an increasing amount of soy that is highly processed and unfermented.

Soybeans alone are not a major food in the diet but soy based additives are now added to a wide range of food products. Processed soy foods and foods containing soy ingredients should be strictly avoided.

Large amounts of refined and unfermented soy products have found their way onto our supermarket shelves. Soy is now found in bread, breakfast cereals, biscuits, crackers, margarine, chocolate, sauces and soups. Soy is also used to make soy milk, soy cheese, soy ice cream, soy protein,
texturised vegetarian soy protein, soy protein bars, soy lecithin and soy oil. Check the ingredient list on the nutritional panel to find out if a food item contains soy oil or soy isolate. Note: soy oil is often labeled as ‘vegetable oil’. This makes it sound healthy but it is far from healthy. Vegetable oil is usually soy oil, canola oil or a mixture of these two unhealthy oils.

- **Soy is a common allergen.** Soy intolerances are becoming more widespread as soy is used in a wide variety of processed foods. Intolerances to soy are fairly mild and do not usually a pose risk of anaphylaxis. However a soy intolerance will further contribute to a thyroid problem.

- **Unfermented soy products** contain phytates. The problem with these ‘anti-nutrients’ is that they rob the body of important minerals such as zinc, iron, magnesium, copper and calcium. If you have been over doing soy products you may be low in these minerals. Phytates are destroyed by the soy fermentation process.

- Some **chemical additives** in soy foods can have a goitrogenic effect on your body. For example soy is contaminated with hexane, a toxic chemical solvent. Soybeans are bathed in hexane to process nearly all soy protein ingredients and edible oils. Hexane is prohibited when processing organic soy foods.

- The biggest changes in farming methods occurred over the last century, particularly with the introduction of ‘monocultures’. These are areas dedicated to a single crop. As traditional farming methods are lost and the modern monoculture system of production emerges there is an increasing susceptibility of crops to insects and disease. This then pushes up the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

- **Genetically modified** (GM) soybeans are now widely grown in the world’s major soybean producing countries. Soy is modified to make it resistant to toxic herbicides used to improve crop production. Apart from the issue with genetic modification, insect resistant GM soy is contaminated with pesticide residues. These pesticide contaminants can easily find their way into the food supply.

Soy plantations are monocultures favoured by large agribusiness. The majority of the world’s soy is grown for commercial food supply and is used in animal feed. Soy has become a major ingredient in processed food products. Large soy plantations are viewed by environmentalists as a menace as they add to deforestation of the globe.

**Chapter 22: The Dangers of Thyroid Disrupting Chemicals**

Along with widespread global industrialisation a cocktail of dangerous environmental chemicals now flood the environment. Emerging evidence suggests the thyroid is extremely vulnerable to the effects of toxins. As our planet becomes more polluted and our food supply becomes more contaminated it should be no surprise the prevalence of thyroid problems is skyrocketing.

There are a range of toxins that irritate and inflame the thyroid. The most significant thyroid toxins include: organochlorine pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metals, halides, dioxins and furans.

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Thyroid disrupting chemicals (TDCs) interfere with thyroid health on many levels. TDCs alter the structure and function of the thyroid gland, alter regulatory enzymes associated with thyroid hormone balance or change circulating or tissue concentrations of thyroid hormones. Several environmental toxins strongly resemble thyroid hormones and interfere with binding of the thyroid hormones to receptors or transport proteins.

Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, the major cause of hypothyroid conditions, is triggered by an autoimmune response. The body does not normally attack itself. So why does it do this? What has infiltrated the thyroid tissue? The immune system now views the thyroid tissue as a threat. It is proposed that the development of autoimmunity is strongly linked to environmental chemical exposure, infections & heavy metal toxicity.

**Toxic Halides**
Halides are a family of chemicals that are very closely related. The group includes; iodine, fluoride, chlorine, perchlorate and bromine. Apart from iodine these chemicals are harmful, even in small quantities.

What makes these compounds so dangerous is that they compete for the same receptor sites in the body that are used to capture iodine. When iodine is low these toxic halogens can fill up receptor sites. This means iodine is often crowded out by these toxins.

Once receptor spaces are taken up by harmful halides the iodine that is available is blocked from doing its job. Supplementing with iodine offers the best protection against toxic halides. The body has the ability to gradually displace these toxins from the body, especially in the thyroid.

**Perchlorate,** the explosive ingredient of rocket and missile fuel is an example of a man-made chemical with well known anti-thyroid effects. This environmental toxin interferes with iodine uptake into the thyroid gland. Serious concerns now exist that perchlorate, has seeped into the drinking water of the Pacific Southwest region of the United States. Perchlorate contamination is most prevalent in California, Arizona and Nevada.

For more information on percholate visit the Environmental Protection Agency, USA website: [http://www.epa.gov/swerffr/documents/perchlorate.htm](http://www.epa.gov/swerffr/documents/perchlorate.htm)

**Fluoride** has substantial potential to block thyroid function. This is best illustrated by the fact that fluoride can be used as a thyroid suppressing medication for hyperthyroid conditions. Fluoride reduces activity of the thyroid gland, even at small doses.

Fluoride is added to urban water supplies and dental products are a common source. Fluoride may help prevent tooth decay if used externally. But drinking it makes as much sense as eating sunscreen to prevent sunburn. Check your local water supply; the USA and Australia have the highest fluoridation rates. Most European countries choose not to pollute their water supply with fluoride.

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Symptoms of *fluoride toxicity* are strikingly similar to the symptoms of hypothyroidism. For more information about the dangers of fluoride, visit the Fluoride Action Network, USA website: [http://www.fluoridealert.org/](http://www.fluoridealert.org/). For truly healthy water in your home you will need a water filtration system that removes toxic halogens.

**Bromine** compounds are widely used in agriculture, pharmaceutical drugs, water purification systems and is found in flame retardant products. The daily diet is also a major source of exposure. Some soft drinks contain bromine in the form of brominated vegetable oils and potassium bromate is used as an additive in commercial breads and baked goods. Exposure to brominated compounds not only causes the body to excrete iodine, bromide toxicity can wreak havoc on thyroid health.

**Heavy metals** also have the potential to act as potent TDCs. The sensitive thyroid gland can be affected by; cadmium, aluminium, fluoride, arsenic, mercury and lead. Heavy metals accumulate in the thyroid and block normal function. These metals can also tip your nutritional balance. For example; mercury displaces selenium, the mineral critical for conversion of T4 to T3.

The nutrients selenium, alpha lipoic acid, zeolite, vitamin C, reduced glutathione and fibre assist clearance of toxic heavy metals.

This table lists heavy metals along with the common sources and adverse effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toxic Metal</th>
<th>Common Sources</th>
<th>Adverse Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aluminium</td>
<td>Drinking water, antiperspirants, antiperspirant crystals, antacids, cooking utensils, baking powder &amp; bentonite</td>
<td>Immune suppression, lowered brain function &amp; dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic</td>
<td>Preserved wood (playground equipment &amp; garden borders), drinking water, pesticides &amp; seafood</td>
<td>Decreased thyroid function, digestive disturbance, vascular damage, nerve damage, skin pigmentation &amp; immune suppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadmium</td>
<td>Cigarettes, air pollution, seafood, agriculture &amp; drinking water</td>
<td>Decreased thyroid function, kidney damage, vascular damage &amp; lowered brain function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluoride</td>
<td>Fluoridated dental products, drinking water, agriculture, air pollution &amp; seafood</td>
<td>Decreased thyroid function, toxic accumulation in bone &amp; teeth, dental fluorosis &amp; lowered IQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Lead based paint, water pipes, drinking water, air pollution, cigarettes &amp; mining</td>
<td>Decreased thyroid function, lowered brain function, hypertension &amp; vascular disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Seafood, dental amalgam fillings, broken mercury thermometers &amp; vaccines (some contain a mercury</td>
<td>Decreased thyroid function, depression, anxiety, intellectual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Water Quality
An abundant intake of clean, pure water allows your body to perform all the healing processes that it is naturally capable of. But water quality is now a major public health concern. Pharmaceutical/recreational drug residues, heavy metals, artificial sweeteners and other chemicals contaminate our urban water supplies. Water treatment plants are not designed to remove these residues. Reverse osmosis filters may be the best option to help clean up your water.

If you buy bottled water check the source. It is not always from pristine, natural source such as mountain springs. Your bottled water may in fact be filtered tap water and plastic bottles are often heated to extremes during transport.

Chapter 23: Reduce Exposure to Thyroid Toxic Chemicals
Overtime, our exposure to TDCs wreaks havoc on thyroid health. We cannot simply remove ourselves from all pollution, but reducing exposure can help.

Here are 11 strategies to help minimise exposure to toxic chemicals.

1. **Stop eating processed food**: this reduces your exposure to synthetic dyes, flavouring agents, chemical preservatives, emulsifiers, texturisers, humectants, ripening gases, bleaching agents and chemical sweeteners.

   If possible, choose organic & socially responsible produce. Certified organic products are grown and processed without the use of synthetic chemicals, fertilisers or genetic modification. Your everyday purchasing decisions can also support farmers committed to a cleaner environment.

2. **Quit smoking** if you smoke. Smoking decreases both thyroid hormone secretion and the action of these hormones. Cigarettes contain thyroid disrupting chemicals; nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide (found in car exhausts), formaldehyde (found in embalming fluid), hydrogen cyanide (found in pesticides), hydrochloric acid (a corrosive acid), toluene (found in solvents), ammonia (found in some cleaning products) and acetone (found in nail polish remover).

3. **Filter all your water** for drinking & cooking. Urban tap water has become a toxic cocktail. Filter contaminants out of your water and avoid dental products containing fluoride.

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Use glass or stainless steel water bottles. Over time plastic bottles leach chemicals into the water. If you taste plastic, you are drinking it so get yourself a new water bottle.

4. Use cast iron or stainless steel **cooking pans**. Teflon cooking utensils emit toxic particles and gases. These chemicals are known to be poisonous to birds with DuPont warning that fumes from Teflon coatings can be fatal for pet birds. In humans the fumes cause headaches, chills, backache and fever.

5. Eat **fish** with lower contamination issues such as local reef fish, mackerel & sardines. Fish with higher contamination rates include; flake (shark), orange roughy, catfish & swordfish. This advice is particularly important for pregnant women as the unborn baby is more vulnerable to the harmful effects of environmental toxins.

6. Avoid chemicals that have leached into food by buying **fresh food**. Avoid canned food, convenience foods & products stored in plastic. Food that is **microwaved** is a source of phthalates when heated in plastic. The safest option for you and your family is to stop using a microwave.

7. Buy clothing garments locally made from **natural fibres** such as organic cotton, cotton, hemp, silk & wool. These are safer fabrics to place against your skin, reducing absorption of chemicals such as formaldehyde resins through the skin.

   Chemicals such as formaldehyde are effective in softening fabrics and rendering them wrinkle free. Without strict controls, especially in developing countries the tendency is to use these chemicals freely to develop more user friendly products.

   These chemicals are difficult to remove from textiles, they are designed to persist. Unfortunately they are just as difficult to remove from the body. They accumulate, leading to possible allergies or toxicity problems.

8. Eliminate **toxic lifestyle habits** such as smoking, high alcohol intake & recreational drug use. Consider a gentle detox program once a year to rid yourself of accumulated toxins. This is especially important if you suspect chemical sensitivities or are planning for pregnancy (both partners). When undergoing any detoxification program, using a health practitioner with particular expertise in this field provides the greatest assurance of a safe and effective outcome.

9. If you suspect **mercury toxicity** consider removing silver amalgam fillings with a qualified holistic dentist. The thyroid gland is in close proximity to this source of mercury. Over time these fillings break down releasing mercury into your body. Replace fillings with non-metal (composite) fillings. Mercury is not the only dental hazard. Root canal treatment can establish a focal point of infection which will cause systemic illness and autoimmune reactions. Read more at Weston A. Price: [http://www.westonaprice.org/dentistry/](http://www.westonaprice.org/dentistry/) and Consumers for Dental Choice: [http://www.toxicteeth.org](http://www.toxicteeth.org).

10. Choose non-toxic **personal care products**. Avoid perfumes, cologne & other products with synthetic fragrances. It is ironic that cosmetic companies invest heavily into developing new...
products that may disguise the signs of ageing yet they use ingredients that are possible carcinogens, neurological toxins, immune suppressants and hormone disruptors, so the overall effect can be drastically ageing. Check what’s in your products at the Skin Deep: Cosmetic Safety Review website: http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/

Your local health food store stocks personal care products and cosmetics that won’t damage your health.

11. **Go for green** in your home by choosing natural building products, try non-toxic pesticide control alternatives and use environmentally safe cleaning products & air fresheners.

**Chapter 24: Fertility, Pregnancy & Your Thyroid**

Severe hypothyroidism will reduce your ability to fall pregnant, and even maintain a fit and healthy pregnancy. So if you are having problems conceiving it is important to get your thyroid checked straight away.

Failing to treat an underactive thyroid prior to conception can increase your risk of miscarriage, premature birth and developmental delays. This is due to the fact that the baby relies on a surge of maternal thyroid hormones to provide the essential fuel for higher brain development and optimal genetic expression.

*A plentiful supply of thyroid hormones is critical in the first trimester.*

If you are pregnant, breast feeding or considering having a baby it is suggested that you supplement your daily diet with **iodine**. This mineral is critical for thyroid hormone production. An iodine deficiency can have adverse effects in all stages of development but is most damaging to the developing brain. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that women living in iodine deficient areas, including Australia should take an iodine supplement before, during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Most health professionals now recommend iodine along with a comprehensive multivitamin and mineral supplement that also supplies at least 500mcg of folic acid.

As for your diet, it is recommended that you switch to sea salt and increase consumption of fresh fish. Note: Shellfish such as prawns and lobster are not recommended in pregnancy.

Some of the **symptoms of hypothyroidism** such as exhaustion and weight gain are common in pregnancy so the diagnosis of poor thyroid function is often overlooked. If you think your thyroid is causing problems speak to your health practitioner regarding thyroid blood tests. This will help determine whether your symptoms are due to an under active thyroid.

For most women it is safe to take **thyroid hormone medication** during pregnancy. But this should be done in consultation with a health practitioner familiar with thyroid problems associated with pregnancy. If you are already taking thyroid medication prior to pregnancy the dose should be checked regularly as the requirements may change throughout the pregnancy.

**Postpartum thyroiditis** can develop within a few months after having a baby. This form of thyroid inflammation is painless and causes little or no gland enlargement. However, postpartum thyroiditis can interfere with thyroid hormone production. Thyroid hormones may leak out of the inflamed gland
in large amounts causing hyperthyroidism that lasts for several weeks. Later, the injured gland may not be able to make enough thyroid hormone resulting in temporary hypothyroidism.

Postpartum thyroiditis usually resolves on its own after several months. Following The Natural Thyroid Diet can help bring your thyroid back into balance.

Post-natal depression (PND), also known as postpartum depression is associated with severe mood swings and depression after child birth. Post-natal depression may appear to be the 'baby blues' at first but the symptoms are more intense and last longer. Take a look at the common signs and symptoms used to evaluate and diagnosis PND:

- Severe mood swings
- Overwhelming fatigue
- Feelings of shame, guilt or inadequacy
- Difficulty bonding with the newborn
- Thoughts of harming yourself or the newborn
- Withdrawal from family and friends

Some of these symptoms strike a remarkable resemblance to hypothyroidism, and make in fact indicate a low thyroid problem. As hypothyroidism has become so common it makes sense that all women with postnatal depression have a complete thyroid assessment to rule out hypothyroidism as the cause.

The standard medical treatment for PND is anti-depressant medication. This type of medication aims to correct possible chemical imbalances in the brain. But this may not be an effective treatment if the PND is related to your thyroid. Treating the thyroid may be the real solution.
Chapter 25: The Natural Thyroid Diet - Introduction

The Natural Thyroid Diet is rich in natural, unprocessed foods. It also provides a natural source of nutrients to support healthy thyroid gland function.

*The key to lasting weight loss is to avoid thyroid damaging foods.*

The Natural Thyroid Diet contains an abundance of thyroid nourishing foods such as fruits & vegetables and nutrient dense whole foods such as healthy grains, legumes, seeds and nuts. These natural foods also provide fibre, which has a protective effect particularly on the cardiovascular system. Lean protein sources, natural fats and drinking at least 1-2 litres of filtered water daily are also recommended.

This diet program is designed to help you lose weight as many people with an exhausted thyroid find it difficult to maintain a healthy body shape. The goal is to achieve healthy body fat levels and good muscle tone.

There is also information on exercise to help stimulate metabolism. When the thyroid gland is under active the internal metabolic furnace is turned down.

The Natural Thyroid Diet will help you identify and eliminate thyroid damaging foods. It may surprise you to learn that everyday foods may be sabotaging your thyroid.

**Goitrogenic Foods: Do They Hurt Your Thyroid?**

Goitrogens are substances that block thyroid hormone synthesis and interfere with iodine metabolism. Some foods can act as goitrogens to some degree. There are two general categories of goitrogenic foods: soy foods and cruciferous vegetables. **Note:** Environmental chemicals and other toxic compounds can have a much stronger goitrogenic effect.

- **Cruciferous vegetables** include cabbage, Brussels sprouts, turnips, bok choy, kale, cauliflower and broccoli. These vegetables should be limited but not avoided all together. The health benefits of these foods outweigh a possible negative effect on the thyroid.

  Isothiocyanates are the category of substances in cruciferous vegetables that are associated with decreased thyroid function. When you **cook or ferment these vegetables** you switch off the goitrogenic effect. Isothiocyanates appear to be heat sensitive, with cooking lowering availability. The goitrogenic effect of these foods is only significant when consumed in large amounts and there is a coexisting iodine deficiency. Also remember to rotate your vegetable choices so you are not eating the same ones every day.

  **Fibre** is abundant in fruit, vegetables and healthy grains. Fibre contributes to improved blood sugar control and healthy bowel function.

- **Strictly avoid gluten.** Many thyroid patients experience improvements when they eliminate grain foods containing this common allergenic food factor. Gluten free options are listed later in the Food Selection Lists 3 & 4.

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- **Avoid refined salt.** Resist liberally sprinkling table salt over your food or in cooking. Only use small amounts of Himalayan or sea salt during food preparation. Too much salt will amplify problems with fluid retention.

- **Eliminate sugary foods.** This includes sugar, soft drinks (soda), cookies, cakes, chocolate, sweets and processed breakfast cereals. These are all loaded with sugar and play havoc with blood sugar control. Problems with blood sugar control go hand in hand with low thyroid function.

- One type of **protein** food such as fresh fish, organic lean red meat, organic chicken, organic eggs or secondary protein such as whole grains and legumes should be eaten once a day to help stabilise blood sugar levels. Fish is an ideal protein source as it does not contain saturated fat. Eat local, fresh fish 2-3 times a week if you are not a vegetarian.

- Increase the essential **good fats** in your diet. Cold water fish, organic eggs, avocados, extra virgin olive oil, macadamia nut oil and raw nuts & seeds are rich in essential fatty acids.

- Limit the intake of **saturated fats** that are found in red meat, chicken, deli meats and dairy foods. Deli meats are particularly toxic.

- Avoid **trans fats** or ‘plastic fats’ found in margarine, TV dinners, bakery foods, commercially prepared snack foods and deep fried food. These very unhealthy fats are formed when liquid vegetable oils are partially hydrogenated or ‘hardened’ for use in spreads such as margarine, cooking fats for deep frying and shortening for baking. Some trans fats are formed during high temperature cooking. These fats are very damaging to the thyroid cell membranes.

- **Eliminate stimulants.** Caffeine loaded drinks such as coffee, black tea, soft drinks & energy drinks over-stimulate the nervous system and take their toll on your energy reserves.

- Kicking the soft drink habit is a critical step for achieving lasting health. Shifting to diet soft drinks isn’t enough. Avoiding the refined sugars found in regular soft drinks by turning to diet soft drinks simply trades one metabolic disruptor ingredient for another.

- Avoid **alcohol** as it is a well known thyroid suppressor. Not only that, alcohol is packed with empty calories and places enormous stress on your liver. This is a problem when you have low thyroid function as the liver plays an important role in thyroid hormone activation.

- Ensure you eat regularly and choose **healthy snacks** mid morning and mid afternoon to balance your blood sugar levels throughout the day and help fight fatigue. Fruit, nuts, seeds, fresh organic juices or smoothies are healthy snacks.

- **Don’t cut calories.** You may be tempted to lower your caloric intake but this is not a good idea. Drastically reducing calories will lower T3 production, initiating an ongoing cycle in which the metabolic rate slows, leading to weight gain. Choose thyroid nourishing foods and avoid high calorie items. Packaged and processed foods contain the most calories and the lowest health benefits.
• **Avoid genetically modified (GM) foods.** Genetic engineering is the process of transferring specific traits or genes from one organism into a different plant or animal. These ‘frankenfoods’ as they are sometimes called are not always identified as such on ingredient labels. Soy, canola and corn are used in many food products and are the most prevalent GM ingredients.

• Avoid foods that contain **sugar compounds** such as high-fructose corn syrup, sorbitol, fructose, mannitol, maltitol, isomalt & glycerol. **High fructose corn syrup** is believed to interfere with messages to the brain that signal satiety (appetite satisfaction), which can lead to over eating. This sugar compound also decreases the effectiveness of insulin, the hormone that helps you burn sugar for energy.

• Avoid foods containing dangerous **artificial sweeteners.** A range of artificial sweeteners are found in diet products including soft drinks, chocolate, chewing gum, lollies, desserts, yoghurt, table top sweeteners, snack food and meal replacements. They can also be found in medications and nutritional supplements.

  The most common artificial sweeteners are **aspartame** (such as Equal, Hermesetas and Nutrasweet) and **sucralose** (Splenda). Other artificial sweeteners include saccharin (Sweet’N Low), neotame, tagatose and acesulfame K. The diet industry is worth trillions of dollars to food corporations, and they protect their profits by keeping the truth about the dangers of artificial sweeteners hidden from the public. There is compelling evidence that some sweeteners have the potential to cause cancer, weight gain and neurological disease.

  Chemical sweeteners have no place in a healthy diet. Safe alternatives to harmful artificial sweeteners are small amounts of natural honey, stevia, xylitol and agave nectar.

  Do you want more information on the **dangers of artificial sweeteners**? Visit: [http://www.natural-weightloss-programs.com/artificial-sweeteners.html](http://www.natural-weightloss-programs.com/artificial-sweeteners.html)
Chapter 26: The Natural Thyroid Diet Basic Guidelines

The declining quality of the world's food supply is a major factor in the rapid rise of thyroid disorders. Our diet is very different from what our ancestors ate. Corporate farming and the mass production of food have drastically changed our food quality. Today, the emphasis is on industrial efficiency and lower costs, not on quality of food.

The high calorie, nutrient deficient foods now filling our supermarkets are extremely damaging to the thyroid. When your thyroid doesn’t get the nutrition it needs it becomes exhausted. This makes long term weight loss next to impossible.

The Natural Thyroid Diet is a wholistic approach to eating well to help recover thyroid health. It is a step by step guide to enhancing whole body health. I want you to achieve a feeling of wellness, the ability to wake up every day looking and feeling great!

The Daily Meal Plans and Food Selection Lists make it easy to choose healthy foods that nourish the thyroid. Along with regular exercise and reducing stress this will kick start your metabolism to help you achieve lasting weight loss.

The Natural Thyroid Diet - Overview

The Natural Thyroid Diet is in three parts. It is recommended that you read through the three sections prior to commencing the diet program:

- Daily Meal Plans
- Food Selection Lists
- Exercise To Boost Metabolism!
Chapter 27: Daily Meal Plans

What You Need to Know

* The Natural Thyroid Diet is set out using a **Daily Meal Plan**. Use this to plan your meals for each day.

* There are nine **Food Selection Lists** representing each major food group. The Food Selection Lists divides similar kinds of foods into groups. For instance, there is a fruit list, a vegetable list, a starch list, and a meat list.

* Portion sizes are specified for each food. You should be able to choose any food on a list for another food on the same list. For each meal, choose foods from the specified Food Selection List to construct a meal.

* Whenever you can, **prepare your own meals** at home. It is recommended that you compile a shopping list before you go to your local market. With a grocery list in hand, you are less likely to make unhealthy impulse purchases.

* **Eat three main meals** a day. Eat in a relaxed environment, taking your time and chew each mouthful to assist good digestion and to increase satiety. Enjoy a healthy mid morning & mid afternoon snack to help balance your blood sugar levels through the day.

* Eat at least **one fruit or vegetable** serve at every main meal.

* Choose **low fat protein** sources. Fresh, local seafood is best & should be eaten 2-3 times a week.

* A **protein shake** is a convenient way to balance your protein intake. Mix 1 scoop in water, A2 milk, or a dairy milk alternative such as oat, coconut, rice or almond milk. Avoid soy protein and any products that contain artificial sweeteners and flavours. I recommend the Protein Delicious and Pea Protein Delicious protein shakes. These products are free from added soy protein and artificial sweeteners. Available in Australia only. [Click here](#) for more information.

* Be careful with dressings, cooking oils and condiments. They are often sneaky sources of refined sugar and thyroid damaging oils.

* Be aware that most commercial salad dressings contain harmful canola, soy or palm oil. These are usually listed as ‘vegetable oils’.

* Do not drink **carbonated drinks, alcohol or other sugary drinks**. Limit **coffee** to one cup per day if you normally drink coffee.

* **Organic honey, stevia, xylitol and agave nectar** can be used as **natural sweeteners**.

* Do not use a **microwave**. Humans are the only animals on the planet who destroy the nutritional value of their food before eating it.

* Drink 1-2 litres of **purified water** daily.

* Take your **nutritional supplements** as directed.

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## Your Daily Meal Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Grain</td>
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<td>1 Bread</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk or Yoghurt</td>
<td>Milk or Yoghurt</td>
<td>1 Fats &amp; Oils</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1 Protein</td>
<td>1 Protein</td>
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<td>1 Nuts &amp; Seeds</td>
<td>1 Nuts &amp; Seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuts &amp; Seeds</td>
<td>Nuts &amp; Seeds</td>
<td>Shake</td>
<td>Shake</td>
<td>Milk serve</td>
<td>Milk serve</td>
<td>Milk &amp; Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DINNER</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Meat &amp; Fish</td>
<td>Meat &amp; Fish</td>
<td>1 Legumes</td>
<td>1 Meat &amp; Fish</td>
<td>1 Meat &amp; Fish</td>
<td>1 Meat &amp; Fish</td>
<td>1 Meat &amp; Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Fats &amp; Oils</td>
<td>1 Starchy Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Fats &amp; Oils</td>
<td>1 Starchy Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Starchy Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Starchy Vegetable</td>
<td>1 Starchy Vegetable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter 28: Food Selection Lists
There are nine Food Selection Lists representing each major food group. The Natural Thyroid Diet is set out using a Daily Meal Plan. This is used to construct your meals for each day. And for each meal, choose foods from the specified Food Selection List.

Food Selection List 1: VEGETABLES - Your #1 Food Choice
Food Selection List 2: FRUITS
Food Selection List 3: BREADS
Food Selection List 4: GRAINS & STARCHY VEGETABLES
Food Selection List 5: LEGUMES (BEANS)
Food Selection List 6: FATS & OILS
Food Selection List 7: NUTS & SEEDS
Food Selection List 8: CHEESE, MILK & EGGS
Food Selection List 9: MEAT & FISH

It may be useful to print out the Daily Meal Plan & Food Selection Lists to help plan your meals for each day. Remember to make the healthiest choices possible when selecting which foods to eat. Without doubt food in its natural state is the best tasting and most healing to the thyroid.

*Optimal nutrition is the cornerstone to thyroid health*
Food Selection List 1: VEGETABLES - Your # 1 Food Choice

Vegetables are highly nutritious, providing a wide range of vital nutrients. The best way to consume vegetables is in their fresh form. Vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories so they also help you lose weight if you are struggling to shed extra kilos.

Many environmentalists and health experts agree that a local farmers market is the best place to get fresh produce at lower prices. Check your local area for locations and times. Seeking out and preparing healthy food is part of your healing journey. If possible choose organic produce. Conventional produce is tainted by harmful agricultural chemicals. If you are not buying organic fruit and vegetables it is best to wash and scrub them thoroughly.

Cooking Vegetables

When cooking vegetables it is very important not to overcook them. Overcooking not only results in loss of important nutrients, but also alters the flavour of the vegetable. Light steaming, baking and quick stir-frying is best.

Do not boil vegetables unless you are making soup. Avoid cooking your vegetables in the microwave as this destroys their vitality. If fresh vegetables are not available, frozen vegetables are preferred over canned vegetables. Check they are produced locally, not from countries such as China.

Sea Vegetables

Sea vegetables are a rich source of iodine so these should be eaten regularly. Approximately 80% of the body’s iodine is found in the thyroid gland. This trace mineral is critical to thyroid hormone production.

NOTE: The nuclear disaster that occurred in Japan in March 2011 has raised serious concerns regarding the safety of food sourced from areas where radioactive material has been deposited. Avoid consuming aquatic foods such as seaweed from Japan due to possible contamination with radioactive material.

Vegetable Free List

In List 1 you will notice there is also a list of ‘free’ vegetables. These vegetables are termed ‘free’ as they can be eaten in any desired amount because the number of calories you burn in digesting them often offsets the calories they contain. These vegetable can also be used to help you feel satisfied between meals.

Cruciferous Vegetables

Many people believe cruciferous vegetables will inhibit thyroid function. This is rarely the case, especially when they are cooked and your body’s iodine levels are adequate.

Include small amounts of cooked broccoli, kale, bok choy, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage in your diet. The health benefits of the cruciferous vegetables outweigh the possible inhibitory effects on the thyroid.
List 1 - VEGETABLES
Note: that starchy vegetables like potatoes and sweet potatoes are included in List 4: Grains and Starchy Vegetables

One vegetable serve = 1 cup cooked vegetables or 2 cups raw OR 1 cup fresh vegetable juice

|----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-----------|--------|------------|------|-------|-----------|----------------|------|-------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
Spinach
Squash
String beans, green or yellow
Tabouli, 1 cup
Tomatoes
Turnip
Zucchini

**Free List: The following vegetables may be used as often as desired, especially in their raw form:**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa sprouts &amp; mung beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbs – fresh varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad &amp; Dandelion greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watercress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food Selection List 2: FRUITS**

Fruits are a rich source of nutrients, including minerals, vitamins, enzymes and fibre. By choosing from a wide variety of seasonal fruit you gain benefits from an extensive range of health promoting nutrients. Fruit is also an ideal substitute for foods containing refined sugars or chemical sweeteners.

Fruit contains fructose or fruit sugar. The sweetness of fructose can help reduce sugar cravings and unlike white sugar, fructose has a low Glycaemic Index (GI). Fructose in fruit is absorbed slowly into the bloodstream to provide energy. The Natural Thyroid Diet also advocates consuming fruit with other healthy snack foods or with main meals to reduce their possible impact on blood sugar levels.

**List 2 – FRUITS**

**Each of the following serves equals one serve:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh juice</td>
<td>1 cup (200 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Salad, fresh</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit, stewed with 1 tspn honey</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricots, fresh</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricots, dried. Note: can be high in sulphur dioxide (220)</td>
<td>30g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>½ medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Berries</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberries</td>
<td>1 cup or ½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries</td>
<td>1 cup or ½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberries</td>
<td>1 cup or ½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raspberries</td>
<td>1 cup or ½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>1 cup or ½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Creative Gourmet’ Antioxidant Berry Mix (frozen)</td>
<td>½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Sara Lee’ Mixed Berries (frozen)</td>
<td>½ cup frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td>12 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custard Apple</td>
<td>1 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried fruit, no sugar</td>
<td>30 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs, fresh</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>20/1 small bunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guava</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melons</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockmelon</td>
<td>1 cup cubed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeydew</td>
<td>1 cup cubed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelon</td>
<td>2 cups cubed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>5 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paw Paw</td>
<td>½ medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach</td>
<td>1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persimmon, native</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapple</td>
<td>1 cup cubed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plums</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prunes</td>
<td>3 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Fruit</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine</td>
<td>2 medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Additional fruit exchanges (Maximum one per day):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canned Fruit, no added sugar or artificial sweeteners</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>1 tspn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Free List**

- Wheatgrass juice shots

**AVOID**

- Processed fruit & vegetable juices, jam, fruit jelly & fruit bars.

---

**Food Selection Lists 3 & 4: BREADS, GRAINS AND STARCHY VEGETABLES**

Breads, grains and starchy vegetables are classified as complex carbohydrates. These healthy carbohydrates are a vital source of energy. Complex carbohydrates are made up of long chains of simple carbohydrates or sugars. This means the body has to digest or break down the large sugar chains into simple sugars. Therefore, the sugar from complex carbohydrates enters the bloodstream slowly. This allows better blood sugar control and these foods provide energy over time.

As part of a natural thyroid diet these complex carbohydrates are best obtained from gluten free sources. Gluten is a protein found in a wide range of grains. Gluten sensitivity contributes to a wide range of autoimmune responses. It is particularly important therefore to avoid gluten if you have been told you have Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. This thyroid disorder is frequently associated with gluten sensitivity. It is common to notice improvements in health when gluten containing foods are avoided.

Use this list of foods to avoid the wide range of foods and beverages that contain gluten:

- **Grains:** wheat, burghul, triticale, coucous, barley, spelt, kamut and semolina all contain gluten.

- **Flours:** plain, self-raising and wholemeal flours contain gluten. Corn (maize) & rye flour can also contain gluten when wheat flour is mixed in.

- **Breads:** spelt, white and wholemeal breads and rolls contain gluten.

- **Pizza bases, biscuits, crackers, scones and pretzels** usually contain wheat ingredients.

- **Breakfast cereals:** most commercial cereals include wheat. For example Bran Flakes, Wheeties, Weet-bix, Vita-brits and Special K. Also wheatgerm, oat porridge, wheat bran and muesli contain gluten.

- **Pastries and desserts:** most cakes, biscuits, doughnuts, pies and puddings contain gluten.

- **Some chocolates and sweets** contain wheat derived ingredients.

- **Pasta:** spaghetti, lasagne, macaroni, cannelloni made from wheat will contain gluten.

- **Noodles:** Hokkein, soba, udon and many buckwheat noodle brands contain gluten.
- Soy sauce and shoyu are both made with wheat.

- Miscellaneous foods. Crumbed and battered foods, gravy, ice-cream cones, sausages, stuffing, pancake and cake mixtures, sauces, some yeasts, thickening in some ice-creams, waffles, powdered and canned soups. Most fast foods contain gluten.

- Beverages such as Ovaltine and Milo.

Gluten sensitivity is in the spotlight so there has never been an easier time to go gluten free. Most health food shops, supermarkets and speciality baker’s sell gluten free products. There are some foods you may not suspect contain gluten so it is best to check the ingredient list to make sure they are truly gluten free. Choose organic or low sugar options when available.

Here are some suggested alternatives to gluten containing products;

- Rice, rye or 'wheat free' bread.

- Original Ryvita 100% rye crispbreads.

- 100% buckwheat, rye, rice, chickpea or potato flour.

- Brown rice, white rice varieties, amaranth, polenta and quinoa are gluten free.

- Wheat free pastas; the corn pasta generally holds together better than rice pasta.

- Rice noodles and 100% buckwheat noodles.

- Tamari is a wheat free soy sauce. You could also use miso.

- Wheat free sausages can be bought at specialty butchers.

- Corn flakes, rice bubbles and some types of muesli are wheat free. Try rice or polenta porridge in winter. Cooked brown rice with yoghurt, honey and fruit is also a great alternative to boxed breakfast cereals.

**List 3 – BREADS**

**One of the following equals one serve:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breads</th>
<th>1 slice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice bread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat free, rye (no wheat flour)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Bread, Lavash (wheat free)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortilla (corn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AVOID
Bagels, English muffins, fruit muffins, croissants, raisin bread, hot cross buns & crumpets. All products with wheat flour and soy flour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 4 – GRAINS &amp; STARCHY VEGETABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One of the following equals one serve:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cooked cup of grain equals one serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranth, quinoa and polenta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice. Arborio, basmati, brown, jasmine &amp; wild blend varieties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crackers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice cakes, plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat free, rye crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisp breads (wheat free)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour, all wheat free varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muesli varieties – natural or toasted (gluten free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noodles – gluten free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porridge, rice or gluten free variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puffed cereal, unsweetened (Rice or Corn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta, wheat free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starchy vegetables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn on cob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsnips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato, mashed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato, white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVOID</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muesli bars, breakfast bars, snack bars, potato chips &amp; corn chips.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food Selection List 5: LEGUMES (BEANS)**

Legumes, also known as pulses, are among the oldest cultivated plants and remain the mainstay in most traditional diets of the world. They contain a wide variety of nutrients and are a healthy and economical food source.

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Compared with grains, they supply around the same number of total calories, but usually provide greater nutritional value. Legumes are low GI and are high in dietary fibre to keep your bowels healthy.

Including legumes into your healthy eating plan does not mean you have to eat completely different meals. There are lots of ways you can slightly change your favourite recipes to include more legumes.

If you are using dry legumes, these need to be soaked for at least an hour and the water thrown away prior to cooking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 5 – LEGUMES (BEANS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Half a cup of the following cooked or sprouted beans equals one serve:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-eyed peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chick peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felafel, chickpea patties – 2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbanzo beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hummus – 1 tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney beans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID**

Avoid highly refined soy foods such as soy milk, soy cheese, soy protein, texturised vegetarian soy protein, soy protein bars, soy ice cream, soy lecithin and soy oil. This also includes foods marketed as ‘dairy free’ that contain soy derivatives. Only consume small amounts of traditionally fermented soy foods if this is part of your normal diet. This includes traditionally fermented soy milk, tofu, natto, miso, tempeh, and boiled soy beans (edamame).
Food Selection List 6: FATS & OILS

Fats, including oils are a very important part of a healthy diet. (Oils are fats in a liquid state). However, too much fat or the wrong type of fat will cause health problems including a low thyroid disorder. One of the keys to a healthy diet is to eat an adequate amount of good quality fats. It is tricky to know exactly how much good fat you are getting in your diet as most healthy fats are ‘hidden’ as a natural component of food.

The Natural Thyroid Diet limits total fat intake to less than 30% of your total calories. You can ensure you are getting adequate healthy fats by eating foods such as: raw nuts and seeds, salad dressings based on cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil or macadamia nut oil, avocados, organic eggs and cold water fish. These healthy dietary fats are important to improve the health of the thyroid gland and also promote weight loss.

Many everyday packaged foods are now loaded with thyroid damaging oils. When it comes to thyroid health the worst offenders are ‘vegetable oils’ and polyunsaturated oils. Canola, palm and soybean oil are often disguised as vegetable oil. They sound healthy but they actually block thyroid function. Check the ingredient list on the side of the bottle to discover the true oil source.

Use **extra virgin Olive oil, organic Macadamia nut oil** or good quality **coconut oil** as a salad dressing. Mix with one third Balsamic vinegar if desired. Do not use 'lite' olive oil.

**Avoid unnatural trans fats** which damage the thyroid. These manufactured fats are found in margarine, TV dinners, bakery foods, commercially prepared snack foods and deep fried food.

These very unhealthy fats are formed when liquid vegetable oils are partially hydrogenated or 'hardened' for use in spreads such as margarine, cooking fats for deep frying and shortening for baking. Some trans fats are formed during high temperature cooking. Trans fats are also found naturally in meat and milk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 6: FATS &amp; OILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Each of the following equals one serve:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polyunsaturated &amp; Monounsaturated Oils</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable oils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Virgin olive oil * not light, do not overheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macadamia nut oil: use with cooking or salad dressings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaxseed oil *organic – do not heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Udo’s oil’ * do not heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID**

Commercial salad dressings, margarines, deep fried food and commercial snack foods. Thyroid **damaging vegetable oils**; sunflower, peanut, corn, soy & Canola oil. Canola or 'Canadian oil' is not natural; it is from genetically modified (GM) sources.
Food Selection List 7: NUTS & SEEDS

Nuts & seeds should be consumed in their natural, raw state. Avoid roasted or dry roasted nuts as the oil in the nut has been overheated. Also avoid salted nuts & seeds.

List 7: NUTS & SEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each of the following equals one serve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macadamias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nut variety mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nut Pastes. From cashews, almonds &amp; brazil nuts. Not peanuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahini (from sesame seeds)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Saturated Fats (use sparingly)*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butter, low salt</td>
<td>1 tspn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream, light or sour</td>
<td>1 tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream cheese</td>
<td>1 tspn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID**

Nut bars, pine nuts, walnuts, peanut paste & peanuts.

Food Selection List 8: CHEESE, MILK & EGGS

Choose dairy products that are low in fat and free from added sugar, vegetable oils, artificial sweeteners or food additives.

Avoid highly refined soy milk and soy products. In Asia, small quantities of soy are consumed as traditional foods, rather than the large amounts of refined and unfermented soy products that are now found in Western supermarkets. Replace with traditionally fermented soy milk, organic dairy milk or quinoa, rice or oat milk.

If you drink milk, choose A2 milk. All milk contains a variety of biologically active factors known to activate the immune system. A2 milk does not contain the A1 protein which is often responsible for allergic reactions.
**Organic eggs** are more nutritious and come from farms that must also qualify for free range status. Organic eggs are sourced from farms that are free from pesticides, chemical fertilisers and antibiotics, and the birds are fed organically grown grain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Selection List 8 – CHEESE, MILK &amp; EGGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream cheese. ‘Philadelphia’ light or spreadable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm cheddar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricotta &amp; Cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs. Organic, medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oat milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Milk. Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, dairy. No added sugar or artificial sweeteners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, goat's.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID**

Avoid fat reduced cheese (higher in A1 protein). Highly refined soy foods and ingredients such as soy milk, soy cheese, soy ice cream and soy lecithin.

**Food Selection List 9: MEAT & FISH**

When choosing from this list, it is important to choose primarily from the low fat group and to remove the skin of poultry, to minimise the saturated fat content.

Organic eggs and seafood are ideal protein sources as they do not contain saturated fat. Chicken, turkey, pork and red meat are high in saturated fat.

Emphasise cold-water fish such as wild salmon, sardines, tuna and herring as they are higher in essential omega-3 fatty acids. These beneficial oils have a positive effect on cholesterol ratios and triglyceride levels.

Farmed or wild salmon, which is best? A study of salmon fillets obtained from supermarkets in sixteen cities in North America and Europe discovered elevated concentrations of organochlorine compounds such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins and chlorinated pesticides in farmed salmon compared to wild caught salmon. Despite the presence of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids the net health gains of consuming farmed salmon may be outweighed by the high concentration of toxins that find their way into these fish.

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### Food Selection List 9 - MEAT & FISH

*Each of the following equals one exchange:*

**Low fat (less than 15% fat content)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Exchange Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef – lean cuts</td>
<td>120 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish – fresh, local varieties. Grilled or baked</td>
<td>150 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish – canned. Paramount Wild Salmon, tuna varieties in water.</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb – lean cuts</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oysters – shelled</td>
<td>6 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry – free range or organic chicken or turkey, without skin</td>
<td>120 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prawns/shrimp – shelled</td>
<td>100g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea scallops</td>
<td>100g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veal – lean cuts</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medium fat (for each omit ½ fat exchange)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Exchange Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef – ground (15% fat), canned corned beef, rib eye, round (ground commercial)</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organ meats</td>
<td>90 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High fat (for each exchange omit 1 fat exchange)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Exchange Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef – mince, hamburger</td>
<td>90 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck or goose</td>
<td>90 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb – breast</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID**

Cured meats such as bacon, ham, hot dogs & deli meats as these foods are high in nitrate compounds which are carcinogenic (cancer causing).

Fried or smoked fish. Also some fish varieties should be avoided as they contain concentrated amounts of environmental contaminants.

In Australia avoid swordfish, marlin, tuna, shark (flake), catfish (basra), broadbill & orange roughy (sea perch). Check which fish have lower contamination levels in your area.
Chapter 29: Exercise to Boost Metabolism

You must exercise to stimulate your thyroid. Choose activities that fit your energy levels and always exercise within your limits.

Many of the health benefits of exercise are the result of improved thyroid function. Physical activity drives metabolism by stimulating thyroid hormone secretion and increasing the sensitivity of the cells to the actions of thyroid hormones.

Physical activity needs to become a habit in your life as it helps you achieve and maintain a healthy metabolism and body weight.

**Time to Get Moving!**

Exercise burns body fat, improves muscle tone, increases your energy levels and elevates your mood. Exercise can be a powerful antidote to stress. People who are more physically fit tend to have fewer stress related health problems.

Good forms of exercise:
- Walking
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Running
- Tennis
- Golf
- Strength training
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Nordic walking

Remember, if you feel unwell when exercising slow your workout down.

**Walking**

There are many activities that can improve your aerobic fitness. But walking is one of the best overall activities. Walking can be done almost anywhere; it places very little strain on your joints and involves all the major muscle groups.

*Walking is a great fitness activity.*

Walking can be done alone or with a group at your individual pace.

**Expert Tip**

Here are some tips to get the most out of your workout:
- Walk as fast as you can. Walk within your limit and gradually increase your workout time and pace.
- Conquer some hills. Walking up hills or over hilly terrain adds to the intensity of the workout. This increases fat burning and will help tone your buttocks and thighs.
● Walk whenever you can. Think about leaving your car at home when you go out to social activities or go shopping. Walk for 20 minutes in your lunch break. Walk up the stairs instead of taking the lift. Incidental exercise over a day does add up.

As your energy levels and health improve you will be able to tolerate a greater amount of exercise.

When doing any form of exercise it is important to warm up and cool down. A warm up can be as simple as starting your activity at a low level and then gradually increasing the intensity over a five-minute time span.

When you are cooling down, decrease the intensity of your workout. Stretching can be incorporated into a cool down.

Intensity
Taking your heart rate, which is measured in beats per minute, can monitor the intensity of your exercise session.

The easiest way to take your heart rate is to count your pulse over 15 seconds, then multiply this number by 4. This then gives you the beats per minute.

The pulse is most effectively measured over the carotid artery in the neck. You could also take your pulse at the elbow (brachial artery) or the wrist (radial artery).

To improve your fitness level it is recommended that you work at 60 - 80% of your maximum heart rate. At this moderate level you can maintain your workout for a longer period of time. The following equation can be used to determine your ideal heart rate:

For men Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) = 220 - age
For women Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) = 225 - age

Example: A female aged 45 has a MHR of 180. To exercise at safe rate her heart rate should be around 126 beats per minute. (70% of 180 = 126)

Expert Tip
● Increase the intensity of your exercise sessions over time. Once you become comfortable with a routine, it is important to increase the intensity in order to continue benefiting.

Frequency and Duration of Exercise Sessions
It is recommended that you exercise at least 4-5 times a week to improve your fitness levels. The morning is the ideal time to exercise as this kick starts your metabolism for the day.

You will burn more calories, even after you have stopped exercising.

Has a sluggish thyroid caused weight gain for you? Are you ready to optimise weight loss? Then it is best to aim for a minimum of 40 minutes of physical activity. If you are just starting out with an
exercise plan, work within a comfortable level. If you are breathless or feel stressed, slow the pace down.

Doing too much exercise too soon could result in injury. When you start an exercise program that is realistic you are more likely to make lifelong changes.

**Expert Tip**

- The more exercise you do the greater capacity you have to burn calories for energy. Even incidental exercise drives your metabolic rate.
- A daily walk in the morning will result in more calories being burned during the day. This is also a great way to start the day.
- Avoid exercising on main roads and other polluted areas. Walking in a park or by the beach is healthier and more enjoyable.

**Remember to Stretch**

Do you have trouble touching your toes? Do you suffer from back pain? If so, you could benefit from regular stretching to improve flexibility. Stretching reduces muscle tension after exercise and prevents injuries.

*Stretching is convenient and can be done at home.*

Stretching as part of your cool down after exercise is recommended. You may also want to try a gentle yoga or Pilates session to improve flexibility.

**Steps for Success**

- Take your time stretching. Relax into the stretch and hold the stretch for at least 20 seconds.
- Do not bounce in the stretch. This increases the risk of injury and actually tightens the muscles.
- Remember to breathe while stretching. This improves circulation and oxygen supply to the muscles.
- Stretching should not cause pain. Stretch to the point where you can feel the muscle lengthening. If you are sore and your muscles feel tight the next day you may have overstretched your muscles.

**Keep Hydrated**

- Drink 1-2 litres of purified water daily to stay well hydrated. Your body is composed of 60% water, therefore it requires constant hydration.
- Even a 2% drop in body water can trigger fatigue and poor concentration. Thirst may also be mistaken for hunger.
- Avoid drinking at meals as this dilutes the digestive enzymes and reduces absorption of important nutrients. Drink water or fresh juices at least one hour away from meal times.
**Conclusion – The Natural Thyroid Diet**

I sincerely hope you have gained a wholistic perspective to recovering your thyroid in a natural, safe and effective way. By choosing healthy foods that nourish the thyroid, adding nutrients that support thyroid activity, reducing stress and performing regular exercise you can finally look and feel better to get the most out of life.

I wish you all the very best on your journey to wellness!

*Louise O’Connor*  
Naturopath & Wellness Coach

**P.S.** The Natural Thyroid Diet can be life changing. If you are inspired, motivated & celebrating renewed health please share your experience with those who are also struggling with low thyroid function. Refer them to [The Natural Thyroid Diet](http://www.thenaturalthyroiddiet.com) website to purchase their personal copy.

**Feedback**  
If you would like to provide feedback on The Natural Thyroid Diet please use our [Feedback Form](http://www.thenaturalthyroiddiet.com). We like to hear from you.
ABOUT LOUISE O’CONNOR

Louise O’Connor is a leading high profile Australian Naturopath & Wellness Coach with many years of experience in natural medicine. Louise has quickly established herself as an authority on natural thyroid health. Her top-selling e-books The Natural Thyroid Diet and The Thyroid Hormone Solution are breakthroughs in natural thyroid health management.

Louise O’Connor writes and educates on natural health. Louise writes for numerous websites and has been a regular contributing feature writer for Nature & Health for the last four years. Nature & Health is widely considered the best Australian natural health magazine. Louise also writes for Healthy U. This is a free magazine available across Australia from your local Healthy Life store.

LOUISE O’CONNOR – ON THE WEB

The Natural Thyroid Diet
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