



HEALTH AWARENESS

How To Tell If You Have Thyroid Troubles

(NAPSA)—A little knowledge may help you avoid a real pain in the neck. Understanding the sometimes subtle symptoms of a thyroid condition can help you get the treatments you need before the situation can grow serious.

You may be at risk for thyroid disorder if you're:

1. Female. Hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism are far more prevalent in women than in men.

2. Over 60. Thyroid disease can strike at any time, but the risk increases with age.

3. Caucasian. Concentrations of thyroid antibodies suggest the presence of autoimmune disease in 14.3 percent of whites, 10.9 percent of Hispanic Americans and only 5.3 percent of African Americans.

4. Someone with a family history of thyroid disease. Up to 50 percent of first-degree relatives are at risk.

5. Pregnant. Women with autoimmune diseases in their family are at increased risk for developing thyroid problems during and after pregnancy.

6. Someone who consumes too little or too much iodine.

7. Exposed to large amounts of radiation, especially during childhood.

8. A smoker. Studies show a confirmed association between smoking and thyroid disease.

9. On certain medications such as lithium and amiodarone.

Thyroid disease can take several forms. Hashimoto's thyroiditis, the most common thyroid disease in the U.S.; hyperthyroidism, which develops when the body is exposed to too much thyroid hormone; hypothyroidism, or underactivity of the thyroid gland; thyroid cancer; and thyroid nodules, or lumps in or



Take the test. You can help your doctor to determine your risk for thyroid disease. A new self-assessment evaluation is available online at www.thyroidawareness.com.

on the thyroid gland. Any of these can become serious.

Symptoms can include:

- Fatigue
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty with learning
- Hair and nails that don't grow properly
- Dry, itchy or delicate skin
- Puffy face
- Bowel problems
- Increased sensitivity to many medications
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Nervousness, anxiety or irritability
- Trembling hands
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Intolerance of heat or cold
- Muscle weakness or soreness.

An endocrinologist, a doctor who specializes in glands, may be best able to determine if you have a thyroid disease and the best treatment. This can include medication, surgery or radiation.

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists created a new self-assessment tool as part of its "How's Your Thyroid? Who Needs To Know?" campaign. To take the test and obtain more information, visit www.thyroidawareness.com.

Note to Editors: While January is National Thyroid Awareness Month, this story can run at any time.