

Thyroid Awareness Month

January is Thyroid Awareness Month. Often, the thyroid is overlooked, because many symptoms of thyroid disorders are mistaken for different issues. This is why Thyroid Awareness Month is so important. Community Care Physician's strongly suggests speaking with your doctor about your thyroid.

What is the Thyroid?

The thyroid is a small, butterfly shaped endocrine gland found at the base of the neck. It is responsible for many things, such as excreting hormones. It helps regulate body temperature and keeps the brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working as they should. The thyroid is especially important for teenagers – it produces hormones that help control metabolism. It also helps growth and structure of bones and sexual development (puberty).

Thyroid Disease

Thyroid diseases come in multiple forms, such as when the thyroid is not producing the correct amount of thyroid hormones, there is an issue of enlargement, lumps in the thyroid gland, and swelling of the gland. To better diagnose a thyroid issue, doctors will use a medical history, physical exam, and thyroid tests. Occasionally they will perform a biopsy. While there are quite a few types of thyroid diseases, two common ones are Hyperthyroidism and Hypothyroidism. Talk with your doctor to learn more about thyroid diseases and testing.

Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism is an over-active thyroid, which means the thyroid gland produces more hormones than the human body needs. Symptoms of hyperthyroidism includes, nervousness or irritability, fatigue or muscles weakness, trouble tolerating heat, trouble sleeping, shaky hands, rapid and irregular heartbeat, frequent bowel movements or diarrhea, weight loss, and mood swings. Hyperthyroidism can be caused by consuming too much iodine, which can be found in hypothyroidism medication, kelp, and seaweed, but the most common cause of hyperthyroidism is Graves Disease, an autoimmune disorder.

Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism is an under-active thyroid. This is when your thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormones, which is necessary for many bodily functions. It is more common in women, people over 60, and those with other thyroid diseases. Those affected may have varying symptoms, ranging from fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, puffy face, joint and muscle pain, constipation, dry skin, thinning hair, decreased sweating, menstrual issues and fertility problems, depression and a slowed heart rate. If you have been diagnosed with hypothyroidism, speak with your doctor about your prescription. Often, hypothyroid medication can lead to hyperthyroidism if not taken correctly.

Who Thyroid Diseases Mostly Affect

Those most likely at risk for a thyroid disease are women, people over age 60, and those who have a family history with thyroid diseases. Parents of teenagers should also be made aware of thyroid diseases as their children start to mature and go through puberty. Almost 1 in 20 Americans aged 12 and older experiences hypothyroidism. About 1 in 100 Americans have hyperthyroidism. During pregnancy, women should be mindful of their thyroid. Thyroid hormones can affect the health of the mother and

child, even if the mother has never experienced thyroid diseases before. Abnormal thyroid levels can last up to a year after pregnancy.

Community Care Physicians

Community Care Physician is proud to have CapitalCare Endocrinology. The practice is located at 2125 River Road, Suite 303B in Niskayuna. Call to schedule an appointment today at (518) 382-8350. To find out more about the providers and services offered, Community Care Physician's Concierge Care Coordinator would be more than happy to help. Call (518) 782-3800.

Sources:

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