

HASHIMOTO'S THYROIDITIS

by Lawrence Wilson, MD

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Hashimoto's thyroiditis is a very common disturbance of the thyroid gland that is present in many adults, more so women than men. It often causes no symptoms, but it can cause a reduction in the output of thyroid hormone. This is called hypothyroidism. It can also cause a goiter, at times, which is a large, swollen, inflamed thyroid gland. According to allopathic medical doctors, Hashimoto's thyroiditis is an auto-immune type of condition with no known cure, although taking selenium may slow down its progress.

Symptoms. If these occur, they are usually due to hypothyroidism. These include fatigue, dry and brittle hair, depression, dry skin and perhaps others.

Medical treatment. The medical treatment is to prescribe thyroid hormones for it and leave the patient on thyroid hormones for the rest of his or her life. Some doctors also tell people to stay away from iodine when this condition is present.

NUTRITIONAL BALANCING AND HASHIMOTO'S DISEASE

We find that on a nutritional balancing program, Hashimoto's thyroiditis generally goes away completely within a few months, especially if a person does not take thyroid hormones. If one takes hormones, it slows deep healing of this condition. It appears that Hashimoto's thyroiditis is an *opportunistic infection or irritation of the thyroid gland*. This means that when the body is out of balance, this particular condition takes hold. Other opportunist infections include candida albicans, acute and chronic mononucleosis, and others.

Nutritional balancing corrects Hashimoto's disease by a combination of mechanisms:

1. Renourishing the body with dozens of vital minerals, vitamins and other phytonutrients contained in massive quantities of cooked vegetables to be eaten each day. For example, selenium, zinc, manganese and other minerals, along with many vitamins and other substances, are needed to produce thyroid hormones and prevent inflammation of the thyroid. Hashimoto's disease always has an inflammatory component to it that doctor's call "auto-immune".

2. Improving the vitality level by renourishing the body and balancing the oxidation rate, balancing yin and yang forces in the body, and balancing the major mineral ratios in the hair tissue.

3. Other means, such as removing ALL the toxic metals, removing hundreds of toxic chemicals from the body, improving the liver and kidney activity, and much more.

When this is done in an integrated and coordinated fashion, most cases of Hashimoto's thyroiditis clear up quickly and easily without the need for any specific intervention or drugs. In fact, taking thyroid hormones always slows down the healing of the condition and, if possible, the client should stop the hormones for the fastest response.

Is iodine harmful for those with Hashimoto's disease? Iodine in drug form such as Lugol's solution, Iodoral, Prolamine Iodine and others are not recommended. However, we find that iodine in the form of kelp, *in combination with an entire nutritional balancing program*, is not harmful for most people, even though it will stimulate the production of TPO, an enzyme related to the thyroid gland.

Taking kelp, however, rarely causes a reaction in the body because most people are toxic with the *iodine antagonists* – bromine, chlorine and chlorides, and fluorides. The reactions that occur due to taking iodine, especially kelp, may be easily confused with a toxic reaction, when in fact it is a cleansing or

healing reaction. In these cases, it is best to reduce the kelp or iodine for a while and slowly increase it as one can tolerate it.

OTHER POSSIBLE HELP FOR HASHIMOTO'S THYROIDITIS

Although this condition tends to go away on its own, it is notable that the thyroid gland is located at the level of the neck, which is also the location of the fifth chakra or energy center of the body. This center is often damaged, particularly in women, and this may contribute to the condition.

Anything that will help clear, balance and strengthen this energy center will assist in clearing thyroid conditions. These might include massage of the area, foot and hand reflexology on the large toes, all around the neck of the large toes, in particular. Chiropractic may help in some cases, and more rest is definitely helpful. In addition, use of the red infrared heat lamp on the thyroid area may be very helpful.

Thyroiditis during a healing crisis. One of our clients developed thyroiditis while on a nutritional balancing program. She basically had a sore throat, but her thyroid hormone levels also decreased. I urged her to leave it alone, but she went on thyroid hormones at the insistence of her medical

doctor. This appears to have just slowed her healing of this condition. Most likely, the condition was present before beginning a nutritional balancing program and she was experiencing a flare-up of the condition as it healed. We find that blood tests are often skewed for a while as the body rebalances itself.

AN EXCELLENT MEDICAL REVIEW OF HASHIMOTO'S DISEASE OR AUTOIMMUNE THYROIDITIS

By [Mary Shomon](#), from About.com

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Hashimoto's disease, sometimes known as Hashimoto's thyroiditis, autoimmune thyroiditis, or chronic lymphocytic thyroiditis, is an autoimmune disease. In Hashimoto's, antibodies react against proteins in the thyroid gland, causing gradual destruction of the gland itself, and making the gland unable to produce the thyroid hormones the body needs.

Diagnosis

Hashimoto's disease is typically diagnosed by clinical examination that demonstrates one or more of the following findings:

- Enlargement of the thyroid, known as a goiter
- High levels of antibodies against thyroglobulin (TG) and thyroid peroxidase (TPO), detected via blood test
- Fine needle aspiration of the thyroid (also known as a needle biopsy), which shows lymphocytes and macrophages
- A radioactive uptake scan, which would show diffuse uptake in an enlarged thyroid gland

Ultrasound, which would show an enlarged thyroid gland

Symptoms

Symptoms of Hashimoto's can vary. Some people have no symptoms whatsoever, and will have no demonstrable symptoms of the underlying condition. For many Hashimoto's patients, the thyroid becomes enlarged, a condition known as a goiter. The goiter can range from slight enlargement, which may have no other symptoms, to a substantial increase in size.

Some people with Hashimoto's, especially those with a larger goiter, may feel discomfort in the neck area. Scarves or neckties may feel uncomfortable. The neck may feel swollen or uncomfortably enlarged, even sore. Sometimes the neck and/or throat is sore or tender. Less commonly, swallowing or even breathing can become difficult if a goiter is blocking the windpipe or esophagus.

Hashimoto's typically involves a slow but steady destruction of the gland that eventually results in the thyroid's inability to produce sufficient thyroid hormone -- the condition known as hypothyroidism. Along the way, however, there can be periods where the thyroid sputters back to life, even causing temporary hyperthyroidism, then a return to hypothyroidism. This cycling back and forth between hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism is characteristic of Hashimoto's disease. So, for example, periods of anxiety/insomnia/diarrhea/weight loss may be followed by periods of depression/fatigue/constipation/weight gain.

In some cases, the onset of Hashimoto's and elevation of antibodies will be accompanied by a variety of symptoms, including anxiety, difficulty sleeping, fatigue, weight changes, depression, hair loss, muscle/joint aches and pains, and fertility problems, among others.

Treatment

If a goiter causes difficulty swallowing or breathing, or is a cosmetic problem, then thyroid hormone replacement drugs (i.e., levothyroxine or natural desiccated thyroid) will usually be given

to help shrink the thyroid. If drug treatment does not work, or the goiter is too invasive, then surgery to remove all or part of the thyroid may be recommended.

Except in the case of a goiter, most endocrinologists and conventional physicians will not *treat* Hashimoto's disease, as diagnosed by elevated antibody levels, unless other thyroid function tests such as TSH are outside the normal range.

There are, however, some endocrinologists, as well as holistic MDs, osteopaths and other practitioners, who believe that Hashimoto's disease -- as confirmed by the presence of thyroid antibodies -- along with symptoms, are enough to warrant treatment with small amounts of thyroid hormone.

The practice of treating patients who have Hashimoto's thyroiditis but normal range thyroid function tests is supported by a study, reported on in the March 2001 issue of the journal *Thyroid*. In this study, German researchers reported that use of levothyroxine treatment for cases of Hashimoto's autoimmune thyroiditis where TSH had not yet elevated beyond normal range (people who were considered "euthyroid") could reduce the incidence and degree of autoimmune disease progression.

In the study of 21 patients with euthyroid Hashimoto's Thyroiditis (normal range TSH, but elevated antibodies), half of the patients were treated with levothyroxine for a year, the other half were not treated. After 1 year of therapy with levothyroxine, the antibody levels and lymphocytes (evidence of inflammation) decreased significantly only in the group receiving the medication. Among the untreated group, the antibody levels rose or remained the same.

The researchers concluded that preventative treatment of normal TSH range patients with Hashimoto's disease reduced the various markers of autoimmune thyroiditis, and speculated that that such treatment might even be able to stop the progression of

Hashimoto's disease, or perhaps even prevent development of the hypothyroidism.

In the area of nutrition, promising findings from a number of research studies have pointed to the value of the mineral selenium in helping to combat autoimmune thyroid disease. Some studies have shown that selenium supplementation at the typically safe dose of 200 mcg per day can return elevated thyroid antibody levels to normal, or reduce them significantly, therefore warding off development of full autoimmune thyroid disease, and resulting hypothyroidism. For more information, see [Selenium and the Thyroid](#).

Ultimately, however, the autoimmune attack on the thyroid makes the gland slowly less able to function, and eventually, the thyroid becomes underactive. When hypothyroidism itself can be measured by blood tests, many practitioners will finally diagnose the hypothyroidism, and treat the patient with thyroid hormone replacement drugs.

Autoimmune Thyroiditis Attacks

In some cases, the thyroid becomes particularly inflamed, known as a thyroiditis attack. Dr. Steven Langer, author of the book *Solved: The Riddle of Illness*, refers to thyroiditis as like an "arthritis of the thyroid." He explains that just as arthritis attacks the joints with pain and inflammation, thyroiditis can mean pain and inflammation in the thyroid for some sufferers. And in particular, during a thyroiditis attack, common symptoms are anxiety, panic attacks, heart palpitations, swelling in the thyroid area, problems swallowing, and frequently, problems sleeping.

"Thyroiditis attacks classically happen in the middle of the night," says Dr. Langer, which can be particularly troublesome in terms of the ability to sleep.

Dr. Langer suggests taking some calcium/magnesium, which are nutrients that have a sedative effect, along with a pain reliever to

relieve inflammation -- buffered aspirin or ibuprofen -- before you go to bed, this might help. He's found that this helps about two-thirds of his patients suffering from nighttime thyroiditis symptoms.

Reducing swelling is a key aspect of dealing with thyroiditis attacks, according to Dr. Langer. "Just as with arthritis, an anti-inflammatory pain reliever doesn't cure the problem, but it temporarily ameliorates the symptoms."

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