



Autoimmune Thyroid Conditions & Celiac Disease

The thyroid, a butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of the neck, bears the enormous responsibility of regulating hormones that control some of the body's most essential functions – most notably, metabolism. For those with celiac disease, the risk of developing a condition that can affect the thyroid and compromise their overall health is significantly increased.

People with celiac disease are nearly four times more likely to develop an autoimmune thyroid condition, the most common types being **Hashimoto's disease** and **Graves' disease**. On the reverse side, many people with autoimmune thyroid disease may have celiac disease and not even know it!

Hashimoto's Disease

What is it? Who gets it?

Hashimoto's disease, a form of hypothyroidism caused by an autoimmune reaction, is by far the most common type of thyroid disease. The condition is seven times more likely to affect women than men, and frequently runs in families.

During the progression of the disease, the thyroid gland is subject to an antibody attack, causing it to become inflamed and enlarged. As the gland enlarges, it begins to under-function, causing thyroid hormone deficiencies within the body.

If left untreated, individuals with Hashimoto's disease can develop heart problems, birth defects and mental health issues such as depression.

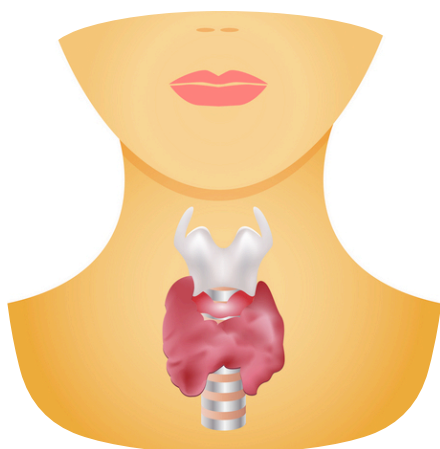
Reference Check

- ✓ **Hypothyroidism - underactive thyroid. Occurs when there is a decrease in thyroid production.**
- ✓ **Hyperthyroidism - overactive thyroid. Occurs when there is an increase in thyroid production.**

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of hypothyroidism include:

- **Constipation**
- **Depression**
- **Dry skin and/or hair**
- **Enlarged thyroid gland**
- **Fatigue**
- **Hair Loss**
- **Low body temperature**
- **Weight gain**



Graves' Disease

What is it? Who gets it?

Graves' disease is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. Like Hashimoto's disease, Graves' is caused by an autoimmune response, which causes antibodies to attack the thyroid gland. However, unlike hypothyroidism, the antibody attack causes an increase in thyroid hormone production.

Those with Graves' disease can also suffer from other conditions, such as heart disorders, pregnancy complications, osteoporosis, and even a rare, life-threatening condition called Thyroid Storm.

What are the symptoms?

Patients with Graves' may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability
- Rapid heartbeat
- Thick, red skin
- Bulging eyes
- Erectile dysfunction
- Menstrual changes
- Reduced libido
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Excess sweating
- Muscle weakness
- Tremors

Think You Have An Autoimmune Thyroid Condition?

Both Hashimoto's disease and Graves' disease can be diagnosed and treated by a doctor. NFCA's website offers details on the specific diagnostic protocols and treatment options for those who might be suffering from these conditions.

Remember, prevalence of celiac disease is higher among those with autoimmune thyroid conditions. If you've already been diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease or Graves' disease, talk to your doctor about celiac testing.

Sources

- Blumer, Ian, MD, Crowe, Shelia, MD. *Celiac Disease for Dummies*, Wiley & Sons, 2010.
- Green Peter H.R, Jones R. *Celiac Disease: A Hidden Epidemic*. HarperCollins, NY, 2010
- Mayo Clinic. Graves Disease. Reviewed July 7th, 2011. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/graves-disease/DS00181>
- WomensHealth.Gov. Hashimoto's Disease. Reviewed May 18th, 2010 <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/hashimoto-disease.cfm>

Need Help? Need More?

For more on Celiac Disease, Symptoms & Related Conditions visit:

www.CeliacCentral.org