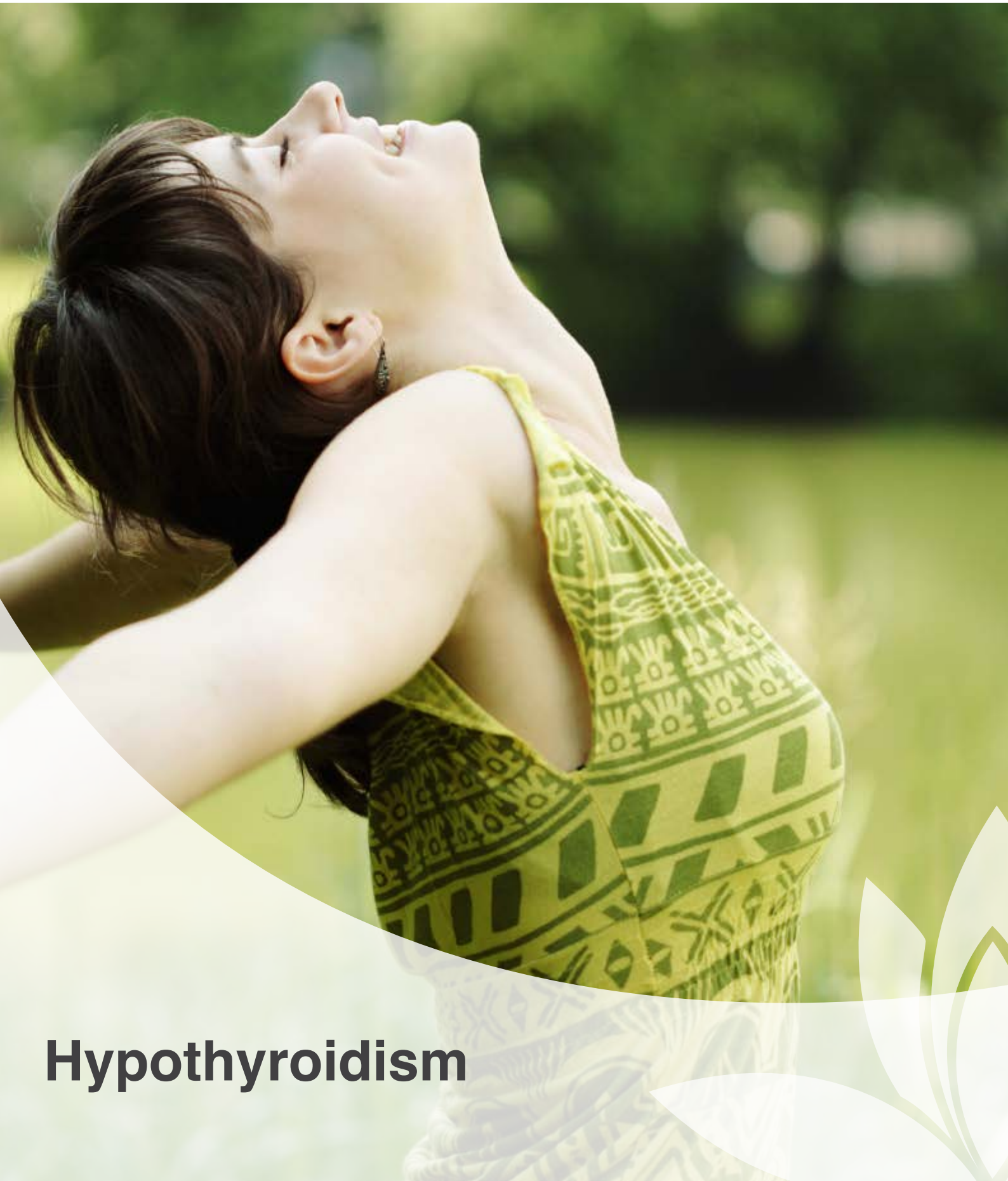




MULLEN NATURAL HEALTH CENTRE



Hypothyroidism



Underactive Thyroid

Underactive thyroid, more commonly known as Hypothyroidism, generally develops gradually and many of the symptoms are sufficiently vague, so that many do not even know that they are experiencing a problem with their thyroid. At Mullen Natural Health Centre, our practitioners focus on finding and successfully treating the cause not just the symptoms.

What is Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland no longer produces enough thyroid hormone or when the hormone is not being converted properly for the body. This can lead to a slower metabolism which sees sufferers gaining weight, feeling overly fatigued, and other related symptoms. Women are ten times more likely to suffer from hypothyroidism than men and, as onset and symptoms can mirror menopause, it can be overlooked. In Australia, the most common cause of hypothyroidism is the autoimmune disease known as Hashimoto's thyroiditis.

Symptoms

Many people report no signs early on as it can develop slowly; however, if you experience the following symptoms, you could be suffering from hypothyroidism:

- Fatigue/exhaustion/low energy (even after a good sleep)
- Constipation
- Weight gain
- Increased intolerance to cold (related to poor circulation)
- Dry hair/skin
- Sluggishness
- Muscle weakness
- Poor memory and concentration
- Depression
- Infertility (female)
- Losing the outer third of your eyebrows

Causes / Triggers

There are many things that may cause and/or trigger hypothyroidism:

Family history

There are genetic factors associated with the development of hypothyroidism in some people, though certain groups of people are more susceptible than others. Thyroid issues can skip generations and whilst some are greatly affected by the inherited tendency, others never develop symptoms.



Autoimmune trigger

A personal history of autoimmune problems can trigger hypothyroidism. Hashimoto's thyroiditis is a disease where antibodies attack the healthy tissue of the thyroid gland. It is also the most common cause of hypothyroidism. This autoimmune disease can be caused by a combination of factors including both genetic and environmental influences.

Health triggers

A body under prolonged stress can develop thyroiditis. Health or stress triggers can include viral illness, pregnancy, treatment for hyperthyroidism (including surgery or prescribed medication), high levels of estrogen (possibly related to polycystic ovarian syndrome PCOS) or toxicity due to smoking.

Dietary triggers

Whilst the body is usually able to balance the blood levels of acid and alkaline, a prolonged disruption of the pH balance (acid stress) can lead to problems. Nutritional deficiencies in iodine, tyrosine, zinc, selenium, vitamin D or iron can also trigger thyroid issues.

- Celiac Disease – this is an autoimmune response to the consumption of gluten with some symptoms that mirror those of hypothyroidism. This disease can often increase the likelihood of a person having Hashimoto's (the autoimmune cause of hypothyroidism) and vice versa. Eating gluten-containing foods can trigger hypothyroid issues for Celiacs because the antibodies that are attacking the gluten protein also attack the thyroid.
- Gluten and/or dairy (casein) intolerance – as with Celiac Disease, general gluten intolerance can trigger hypothyroidism. Interestingly, those who are intolerant to gluten are often casein (the protein in dairy foods) intolerant as well. For those intolerant to gluten and/or casein, when they ingest foods with these proteins, their system becomes inflamed, leading to leaky gut (see below).
- Goitrogenic foods – these are foods which impede the thyroid's ability to get the right amount of iodine – it is important to avoid or, at least, minimise consumption of these foods. They include: bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, garden cress, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, mustard greens, radishes, rutabagas, soy (e.g., soy milk, soybean oil, soy lecithin, tempeh, tofu), turnips, bamboo shoots, millet, peaches, peanuts, pears, pine nuts, radishes, spinach, strawberries, and sweet potatoes.

Emotional triggers

Those who suffer from thyroid issues may find that their internal mental and emotional messages mirror or trigger their physical experience. Those with hypothyroidism can often feel unstable emotionally, thinking can be muddled or as if they have a mental fog. The emotional fatigue can lead to a feeling as if they can't be bothered, sitting back to let others make all the decisions. Overall, there is the sense that "it's just too hard."



Leaky Gut

Leaky gut syndrome occurs when the intestinal lining becomes inflamed, causing it to be permeable or 'leaky'. The inflamed lining allows unwanted substances (like tiny food particles, bacterial waste products and toxins) into the bloodstream which would normally be eliminated from the body. This puts unnecessary stress on the liver, lymphatic system and immune system, as these organs must work to clear the body of the excess toxins. This stress causes inflammation which can adversely affect autoimmune conditions such as Hashimoto's, thereby becoming a trigger for disease.

Leaky gut syndrome has far reaching effects on a person's health and can contribute to or cause thyroid issues as well as other health problems such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), food allergies, celiac disease, dysbiosis (flora imbalance in the gut), asthma, pancreatic insufficiency, chronic joint and muscle pain, and skin rashes like eczema. It has also been linked to autism, ADD and ADHD.

Liver stress

In Naturopathic terms we also associate liver stress with contributing to/triggering thyroid issues in sensitive individuals. Liver stress can be caused by leaky gut, toxin overload, etc. Other symptoms of liver stress include mood swings (anger, depression, anxiety), tiredness or fatigue, hormonal imbalance, headaches, dizziness, weight gain, thyroid problems, muscle aches/pains, blood sugars highs and lows, high cholesterol and triglycerides, skin disorders, increased chemical sensitivity and sighing.

Naturopathic Approach to Treatment

Our approach at Mullen Natural Health is to find and treat your individual causes and triggers, then to help manage and regulate your thyroid function, ultimately, to help rebalance your immune system.

Four Filters (Digestive, Liver, Immune and Kidney)

Good health can be achieved in your body because of the four filters that work to keep your systems in balance. The Digestive filter, Liver filter, Immune filter and Kidney filter work in conjunction to keep your health at optimum levels; however, when one or more are overloaded with toxins or stress, your body's balance shifts which can cause a number of negative symptoms or diseases. With testing, a plan can be created to help eliminate toxins and restore balance so that you can enjoy greater health, both physically and emotionally.

Medical Testing

There are several pathology tests that may be undertaken to identify thyroid issues such as Thyroid Function Tests (TFTs) which will check for Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) levels, Free T4 (thyroxine) levels, Free T3 (activated thyroid hormone), and Anti-thyroid Microsomal Antibodies testing. Depending upon the results of these, further tests may be undertaken to help identify which part of the hormone cycle may be challenged. One of the problems with general medical screening for thyroid is that generally only TSH levels are tested initially, due to Medicare restrictions of T4 and T3 testing unless TSH is out of the recommended pathology range. The medical pathology range for TSH is between



0.4 to 4.5, however from a Naturopathic perspective, the optimal range for TSH is between 0.5 and 1.5, and we believe if TSH is greater than 2, this may indicate subclinical low thyroid function, or at the least, your thyroid needs support.

Naturopathic Testing

The tests used to determine and treat your symptoms related to hypothyroidism include:

- TSH levels, T4, T3, reverse T3
- Thyroid antibody test
- Vitamin D
- Iron studies
- Zinc taste test
- Serum zinc and plasma copper
- Live Blood Analysis (LBA)
- Dry Blood test
- Urinary Indicans Test (Test for dysbiosis)
- 43 Foods IgG food intolerance test
- Iodine patch test
- Basal Body Temperature test

Dietary advice

Changes in your diet can greatly improve the symptoms related to hypothyroidism. Following a modified elimination diet is often our first recommendation and can help you to identify those foods most likely to cause an immune reaction (imbalance.) Generally, a diet of low-inflammatory foods is recommended (this often sees the elimination or reduction of gluten, dairy and acid forming foods such as meat, caffeine and alcohol, etc) along with an increase in foods containing essential fatty acids (nuts, seeds, fish oil). Additionally, increasing the consumption of iodine- rich (e.g., Celtic sea salt, eggs, strawberries, seaweed) and selenium-rich foods is recommended (e.g., mushrooms, fish, Brazil nuts.) As mentioned above, it is also advisable to reduce eating the number of foods that are considered goitrogens (these are foods that can interrupt thyroid function) such as soy products and cruciferous vegetables.

Super Foods for Hypothyroidism

There are several super foods which have been found to lower inflammation, provide anti-oxidants to fight free radicals, supply vitamins or minerals that aid in muscle relaxation and much more. Along with drinking at least 2-3 litres of water each day to aid in hydration, the following super foods can help improve the symptoms of hypothyroidism (depending on an individual's sensitivity):

- Avocado
- Almond
- Carrot
- Tomato
- Banana



- Apple
- Kiwi
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Turmeric
- Blueberry
- Elderberry
- Seeds (chia, sunflower, flax)
- Salmon
- Banana
- Apple
- Kiwi
- Ginger
- Turmeric
- Elderberry
- Seeds (chia, sunflower, flax)

Lifestyle advice

There are some simple, but effective changes to your lifestyle which can help to maintain optimum thyroid function: stress-reduction and exercise. Identifying ways to relax each day like yoga, warm baths, getting a massage or meditating can help to alleviate the added pressure on a stressed thyroid function. Alternatively, regular moderate exercise a few days per week has been shown to stimulate the thyroid. The combination of exercise and relaxation can help to naturally balance your system overall.

Naturopathic Supplement recommendations

During your consultation, our practitioner will prescribe natural medicines initially to treat the symptoms of hypothyroidism whilst also recommending an individualised integrated detoxification program to start to treat the causes. Please note at our practice we prescribe practitioner only natural medicines due to both the quality and the amounts of active ingredients that they contain.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact Mullen Natural Health Centre on (02) 4961 4075 or email us at info@mullenhealth.com.au

Disclaimer of Liability

All information provided is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose any medical conditions. This information is not meant as a replacement for medical assistance, it is meant as a recommendation only, if systems persist we highly recommend you contact your preferred medical practitioner.