Thyroid Gland Function Test

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid gland is situated at the front of the throat, below the larynx (Adam's apple), and comprises two lobes that lie on either side of the windpipe.

The thyroid gland secretes hormones to regulate many metabolic processes, including growth and energy expenditure. If the thyroid gland is overactive or sluggish, the metabolism will be affected, leading to a variety of symptoms.

Overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism)

An overactive thyroid releases too much T4 and T3 into the bloodstream, causing the metabolism to speed up too much.

Symptoms include:

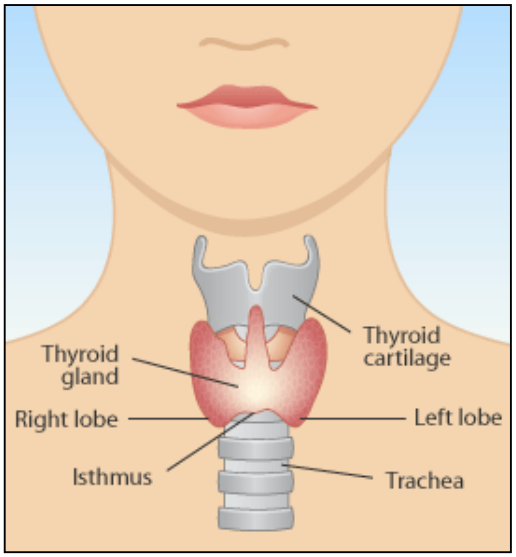
- ✧ Rapid pulse
- ✧ Tremor (shaking) of the hands
- ✧ Sweating and sensitivity to heat
- ✧ Weight loss (despite an increased appetite)
- ✧ Nervousness, agitation and anxiety
- ✧ Fatigue
- ✧ Diarrhoea
- ✧ Bulging eyes
- ✧ Goitre.

Under active thyroid (hypothyroidism)

An under active thyroid releases too little T4 and T3 into the bloodstream, causing the metabolism to slow down too much.

Symptoms include:

- ✧ Lethargy and fatigue
- ✧ Feeling cold (even on warm days)
- ✧ Unusual weight gain
- ✧ Depression
- ✧ Reduced concentration (brain fog)
- ✧ Puffiness of the face
- ✧ Hair loss
- ✧ Dry skin
- ✧ Constipation
- ✧ Goitre.



How does the thyroid temperature test work?

This test is a simple at home temperature test which gives a very reliable indication of your thyroid function. All that is required is to take your body temperature for a few mornings in a row – this gives an indication of your metabolic rate, which is determined by hormones secreted from the thyroid gland.

The normal underarm temperature is between 36.6 and 36.8 degrees. If your temperature is consistently below this level then it is possible that your thyroid is under active.

You may then choose to have a blood test to confirm your thyroid function. This can be arranged by your Doctor or from Bloom Family Health. However, be aware that blood tests often show normal even if the thyroid gland is slightly under active. That is because the tests show only how much thyroid hormone is circulating in the blood and tell nothing of how well the hormones are functioning on a cellular level. Additionally, a loss of up to 70% of thyroid function may occur before blood tests show as abnormal.

Procedure

1 Use an oral mercury thermometer.

2 Shake it below 35ºC and place at your bedside before going to sleep.

3 On waking, **without moving much at all**. Take the thermometer and place it in your arm pit for 10 mins. Lie very still with eyes closed is best. This gives us an idea of your basal (at rest) temperature. (The arm pit because it tends to be more reliable as it is less likely to be raised with sinus or throat infections etc).

4 Record the temperature on the chart for 3-5 days at the same time each morning.

5 If the readings are consistently below 36.5ºC each morning then it is fairly likely that your thyroid is not functioning optimally.

Date	Temperature (ºC)	Date	Temperature (ºC)

Please Note: Menstruating women must preform the test from day 2 or 3 of their menstrual cycle, avoiding the days around ovulation (as hormonal secretions at this time raise the body temperature). Men and post-menopausal women can perform the test at any time.