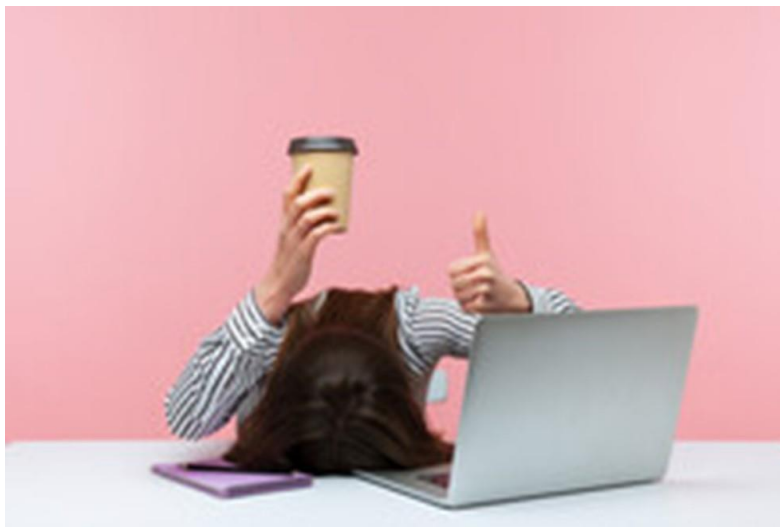


BE WELL

Support Sluggish Thyroid with Nourishing Nutrients

By Debbie DeAngelo
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Ever suspect that your thyroid might be a bit on the slow side? Have you been diagnosed with an underactive thyroid? Do you have symptoms of a low functioning thyroid despite normal blood tests? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then perhaps it’s time to pay attention to this indispensable organ.

Located below the Adam’s apple, the thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland that makes hormones which control the way your body uses energy. It has a

profound effect on the major organs in your body as well. Hypothyroidism is a condition in which insufficient thyroid hormones are being produced. Common symptoms include being extremely cold when others aren't; severe fatigue; chronic constipation; inability to lose weight; depression; excessively dry, itchy skin; difficulty thinking clearly; high cholesterol; elevated insulin; and heavy menstrual cycles.

Although blood tests exist to detect thyroid problems, many people are frustrated to discover that their blood tests are normal, even though they experience many of these symptoms. That's one reason it's crucial to ensure you're nourishing your thyroid, whether it's functioning normally or it's sluggish.

Proper nutrition with high quality food is central to a well-functioning body, including your thyroid. Here are some key nutrients, as well as their food sources, that your thyroid needs in order to manufacture the hormones that keep your entire body humming along.

Vitamin A. Derived from orange-yellow colored produce, vitamin A is needed to produce thyroid hormones. These hormones communicate with every cell in your body to keep you feeling energetic, mentally sharp and of normal weight. Specific foods that are rich in beta-carotene, the precursor to vitamin A, include sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, carrots and greens, such as spinach, kale, and Swiss chard. It's also contained in a standard multivitamin.

Vitamin D. Functioning as both a vitamin and a hormone, D is typically acknowledged for its role in maintaining a strong immune system; however, it's also involved in the manufacturing of thyroid hormones and helping our body to convert them to a usable form. It can be difficult to obtain enough from dietary sources, which consist of egg yolks, mushrooms, cold water fish, such as sardines and salmon, liver, and fortified dairy products. Low vitamin D levels are frequently seen in geographical regions with limited seasonal sunlight. Your level can be checked via blood test. Although normal is defined as over 30 ng/ml, optimal is 50 to 80.

Selenium. This mineral is essential for thyroid function. It's one of the nutrients responsible for the conversion of one thyroid hormone into another more active form. Two Brazil nuts a day will satisfy your selenium needs. Other selenium sources are seafood, sunflower seeds, pork, and chia seeds.

Zinc. Zinc plays a role in thyroid hormone production. Also, it assists selenium in the conversion to the active form of the hormone. Main food sources are eggs, poultry, pumpkin seeds, spinach and miso soup.

Iron. Critical to thyroid health, low iron intake will prevent this master organ from doing its job. Since iron is necessary to prevent anemia, the body will use it for the red blood cells before supplying the thyroid. Beef, leafy greens, legumes, and dried fruit will fortify your iron level. Keep in mind that eating vitamin C rich foods, such as berries, red bell peppers, and broccoli, will help your body absorb iron from foods more efficiently.

Essential Fatty Acids. These building blocks of healthy fats can't be produced in the body, so it's necessary to obtain them through your diet or supplements. In addition to strengthening all the cells in the body, they serve to squelch disease-causing inflammation. Daily consumption of foods like ground flax, avocados, nuts, seeds, seafood, coconut oil, and extra-virgin olive oil will ensure that your fat intake is coming from appropriate sources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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