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THYROID LOVE 101

Know your thyroid, understand the symptoms,
get the right tests and the right diagnosis.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BODY.



Because of a medical system that is sorely lacking in understanding and education of thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory disorders, it's more important than ever to be educated on the basics of these diseases, the testing that can help you really understand what's going on with your body, and how to address the root causes.

As you probably well know, misdiagnosis is all too common with thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory disorders—and an accurate diagnosis is the first step in choosing your best treatment on your road to health. The thyroid functions through a complex series of steps, and the process can break down at any one point along the way.

Unfortunately, in our medical system, if you go to your doctor with thyroid symptoms, chances are that you'll just be given a prescription for replacement hormones—without ever diagnosing the *cause* of your problems. It's flat out wrong to assume that all thyroid disorders should be treated the same way, but that's the way most doctors treat them.

Even more frustrating, if your lab tests come back "normal" they may not do anything except tell you you're fine!

This book will walk you through the rudimentary basics of what your thyroid is, how it is supposed to function, what might be going wrong, and how to diagnose it.

Knowledge is power! So let's get started!

THYROID BASICS

If you're anything like me, you probably never gave a thought to your thyroid until someone suggested it might be to blame for all the symptoms you were having. (Like that song says, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone...")

I honestly didn't know I had a thyroid until mine stopped working. Well, actually, as I learned over time, my thyroid is functioning, but it was under siege. My body had been mounting an autoimmune attack on my thyroid and I learned everything I could to stop the attack. Here's a brief overview of your thyroid and what you really need to know.

WHAT IS YOUR THYROID?

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located in your throat, right below your Adam's apple. The thyroid makes, stores and releases thyroid hormones (T3 and T4) into your blood. This process affects almost every cell in your body, helping control the body's functions and it has a profound effect on cellular energy and metabolism.

Thyroid imbalances come in two major forms, hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism is when there is too little thyroid hormone in your blood. This makes your body and its functions sluggish. Hyperthyroidism, on the other hand, is when you have too much thyroid hormone in your blood and everything starts racing.

Hashimoto's thyroiditis is a condition in which your own immune system attacks the thyroid, and often results in hypothyroidism but can volley you back and forth between hypo- and hyperthyroid symptoms. Hashimoto's disease is progressive, and can be difficult to diagnose, as your thyroid levels can start out within the "normal" range but still not be at optimal levels. It is only one cause of hypothyroidism, but it is the most common. We'll talk more about it later in this section.

HOW DOES YOUR THYROID WORK?

Science is discovering more and more that the systems in our body don't function as separate pieces, but rather all influence one another, and your thyroid is no exception.

The thyroid gland works together with your pituitary gland and hypothalamus to control the amount of thyroid hormone in your body. For some of you, this information will be old hat. But for those just starting out, here's a closer look at how the thyroid works.

1. The hypothalamus gland sends a message using thyroid releasing hormone (TRH) to your pituitary gland.
2. Your pituitary gland then determines how to stimulate the thyroid by sending thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH).
3. TSH stimulates your thyroid to produce inactive T4 and active T3 (thyroid hormones);
 - a. The inactive T4 goes to your liver and intestinal tract to be converted to active T3.
 - b. Active T3 goes straight to the bloodstream to be delivered to your cells.

Important Takeaway: Active T3 is the hormone used by our cells to produce energy and protective steroid hormones. Our thyroid only makes 10% of the active T3 we need to function properly. The rest of the Active T3 (the other 90%) is created when T4 gets converted in the liver.

The more I've learned about the thyroid, the more it seems to be in charge of everything that goes on in the body from basic aspects of body function to all the major systems. (It's actually kind of annoying that it's such a big deal!) Every cell in our body has thyroid hormone receptors, and so every system in your body can be affected when your thyroid is off.

To actually help your thyroid remember how to function properly again, you have to address several of those other systems. For instance, thyroid hormones are responsible for many basic functions in the brain, the G.I. tract, the gallbladder and liver, the cardiovascular system, bone and red blood cell metabolism. If your thyroid function is low, you can experience hair loss, weakened bones, depression and infertility. As we all know too well, the thyroid also affects temperature regulation, hormone production and our metabolism. Fat, bald and moody, anyone?

HASHIMOTO'S: THE HIDDEN THYROID IMBALANCE

Are your TSH levels in the “normal” range but you’re experiencing almost every thyroid symptom under the sun? If so, you’re not alone, and you’re not crazy!

If you suspect you have a thyroid problem but it’s not showing up on the standard panel, it is important you check to see whether an autoimmune condition called Hashimoto’s is at play.

I’m finding there is a lot of confusion out there on what hypothyroidism is and how that differs from Hashimoto’s (autoimmune) thyroiditis. The crucial difference is in what’s affecting your thyroid. With hypothyroidism, your gut, adrenals, stress levels, thyroid hormone conversion problems, and a host of other things could be challenging thyroid function. With Hashimoto’s, thyroiditis occurs when the body inadvertently creates antibodies to signal T-cells to attack the thyroid tissue itself. So often, you’re thyroid is working “fine” but it is under fire as the body is destroying its own thyroid tissue.

If you have Hashimoto’s, you will approach healing a little differently than if you are just dealing with hypothyroidism. In addition to the important dietary and lifestyle changes you can make support healing your thyroid, with Hashimoto’s you have to address the autoimmune response itself. What has a lot of practitioners, doctors, and researchers stumped (including myself!) is that what stops the autoimmune response for some doesn’t work for others, but we’ll cover the options that have worked for many.

Hashimoto’s causes chronic inflammation of the thyroid and is important to get a handle on right away. It is also the #1 cause of hypothyroidism and commonly goes undetected because it’s not included in the standard thyroid test panel. Make sure to ask your doctor to test your TPO and TGB antibody levels. It’s important to take antibody tests a few times. If you get a single negative result, that doesn’t mean you don’t have Hashimoto’s which is why it is important to test your antibody levels multiple times. Sometimes, the immune system can be so suppressed that antibodies aren’t being produced.

OTHER THYROID PATTERNS TO LOOK INTO

There are some patterns of thyroid imbalance that do not readily show up on standard lab tests. This is why 60–80% of thyroid disorders go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed in the United States every year. These patterns indicate thyroid dysfunction and likely you’ll be experiencing symptoms but your doctor will not have the right information to diagnose and treat you effectively. So, it’s important that you be on the lookout for the following patterns:

Under-conversion of T4 to T3

As the inactive thyroid hormone, T4 must be converted to T3 before it can be used by your body, but more than 90% of what your body makes for itself is T4.

If you have inflammation and elevated cortisol levels, it can damage your body's ability to convert T4 to T3. If this is what is happening in your body, you'll have hyperthyroid symptoms, but your TSH and T4 levels will be normal. To diagnose this dysfunction, have your T3 tested, and it should show as low.

Thyroid resistance

With thyroid resistance, your thyroid is working normally, but the hormones it's producing aren't getting where they're needed and you end up with hypothyroid symptoms.

This pattern is usually caused by chronic high stress and high homocysteine. Unfortunately there is no test for thyroid resistance, and your standard labs will all come back "normal."

Hypothyroidism caused by pituitary dysfunction

High levels of cortisol, which can be caused by infection, blood sugar imbalances, stress, pregnancy, hypoglycemia, or insulin resistance, can fatigue the pituitary gland until it stops sending out the signal for your thyroid to release enough thyroid hormone.

In this case, there might be nothing wrong with the thyroid itself, but rather with the pituitary gland

If you have hypothyroid symptoms, your TSH falls below the functional range, but within the standard range, and T4 is low in the functional range, this may be your culprit.

Hypothyroidism caused by elevated TBG

Thyroid binding globulin (TBG) transports inactive thyroid hormone through the blood. If your TBG levels are too high, there won't be enough free thyroid hormone for your body to use.

High TBG levels are often caused by high estrogen levels, usually from birth control or estrogen replacement drugs. You have to get rid of the excess estrogen

to clear this problem.

On your tests, TSH and T4 will be normal, but T3 will be low, and T3 uptake and TBG will be high.

Hypothyroidism caused by decreased TBG

The opposite of the previous pattern, too little TBG means that there's too much free thyroid hormone in your body—and your cells begin to develop resistance to it. So you will have hypothyroid symptoms.

You might guess that this is caused by too much testosterone in your system, and is often associated with PCOS and insulin resistance. Getting your blood sugars under control is key to healing this pattern

Your tests will show normal TSH and T4, but high T3. T3 uptake and TBG will be low.

Important takeaway: The patterns listed above don't show up on standard blood tests, and if one of those patterns is causing your thyroid imbalance, conventional thyroid hormone replacement will not be supportive to healing. That is the challenge with the way our current medical system addresses thyroid disease. It often skips the step of discovering the root cause of the imbalance and treats all thyroid healing the same usually through thyroid hormone replacement. When this method doesn't work for you, the doctor is left with the option of changing your medication or upping the dosage. If your thyroid disorder is caused by one of these patterns, neither treatment will be effective. You must treat the cause of the disorder in order to reverse the disease and eliminate symptoms and knowing the cause of the imbalance will set you on a path for success.

DOCTORS & DRAGONS: FINDING THE RIGHT KIND OF HELP.

“Doctors give drugs of which they know little, into bodies of which they know less, for diseases of which they know nothing at all.”—Voltaire

After three years, two hospital visits, numerous scans of my organs and 13 different doctors, I was finally diagnosed with thyroid dysfunction. The first 12 doctors told me they had run a “full” blood panel and that they were checking my thyroid. Most of them told me I looked fine, my vitals were good and that I was just stressed. One doctor intimated that this “stress” was causing me to become a hypochondriac. Sound familiar?

What I knew was that something was really wrong with my body. But, was anybody listening? Really listening? Or, were they just checking off boxes on a sheet of paper that concluded that this was all in my head? Once I got fed up with the answers (or lack thereof) I received from my doctors, I stopped settling and committed myself to finding someone who did know, who could help and who would listen.

HAVE YOU SETTLED FOR A BAD DOCTOR?

When it comes to your health, it’s important not to settle for less than the best. Make certain whoever you work with does not exhibit the following qualities.

Signs that you’ve settled for a bad doctor:

- **The doctor doesn’t listen.** Does your doctor really listen when you explain your symptoms and concerns? If your doctor is more interested in the sound of his/her voice and less interested in relieving your symptoms and helping you heal, it’s time to look elsewhere.
- **The doctor keeps you in the dark.** Does the doctor talk to you about his/her reasoning for ordering tests or medication? Are you able to easily get copies of your test results and doctor’s notes when you request them? A doctor should be open and communicate thoroughly with you about anything and everything to do with your condition and diagnosis.
- **You don’t feel comfortable with your doctor, or wonder about his/her competence.** The doctor who finally gave me a diagnosis is WONDERFUL. But, when I asked him how my diet should be structured to help heal my thyroid, he couldn’t offer me much. After all, most doctors will admit that they didn’t

learn much about nutrition during medical school. Since my doc is competent in other areas and takes the time to listen to my needs, I stuck with him for a few extra months. However, if you feel uncomfortable or don't trust that your doctor knows what he/she is doing, it's time to find someone else. You need to feel confident and trust that your doctor knows how to help you. If you don't, it's time to move on. Even if they are the sweetest person in the world, you must move on. Don't settle for a doctor who doesn't know how to help you heal or relieve your symptoms.

- **The doctor is not a team player.** If your doctor won't coordinate with other doctors, coaches or practitioners, you may want to look for someone else. As I mentioned above, most doctors are not well-versed in dietary theories that support healing. So, after I received little advice from my doctor, I sought out someone who could help me with nutrition and asked my doctor to coordinate with her. He was happy to and that's how I knew I had a winner. No doctor knows everything and each of us deserves and needs a healing team to help us with all aspects of our health.
- **The office staff is unprofessional.** The office staff is the link between you and the doctor. If they are rude, rushed, neglect to give your doctor a message from you or blow you off, you may want to consider looking elsewhere. Sometimes it happens that the doctor is wonderful but his/her staff is lackluster. If the office staff is unprofessional and impeding your care, bring it up with your doctor. If it continues, you may want to shop around. A caring doctor will make sure his/her staff is trained to reflect his/her values.
- **The doctor doesn't respect your time.** Do you find yourself routinely waiting an hour to see your physician then once you're in front of him/her, you feel like you're being rushed through the visit? Is your appointment frequently being rescheduled? If your doctor doesn't respect that your time is valuable too, there's a problem. He/she should be focused on answering your questions or addressing your concerns and not rushing you through the experience.
- **The doctor can't be reached.** A good doctor is available for follow-up questions and concerns via email, phone, Skype or text message. If you can't contact your doctor between visits, there's a problem. Fortunately, a growing number of physicians are making themselves available to their patients. I have my doctor's cell phone number for emergencies. I've only used it one time and it saved me a trip to the hospital.
- **The doctor is rude or condescending.** If your doctor is a jerk to you in any way, it is definitely time to part ways. If they disregard your requests or trivialize your symptoms, you need to steer clear. Don't settle for a bad doctor. You deserve the best!

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR FOR YOU

If you've determined that you've settled for the wrong doctor, you can still get help. Here are some tips so you can find the right doc for you without having to kiss too many frogs.

Look for a doctor who practices functional medicine

A doctor who practices functional medicine uses a holistic approach where they address the underlying causes of disease instead of treating each symptom individually. Functional doctors look at the whole picture. This is particularly important for thyroid and autoimmune sufferers as thyroid disease involves several systems being out of balance at once — usually the thyroid, adrenals and gut but there can be more.

Functional medical doctors tend to have more and varied education and work with the patient in partnership so they can heal. An appointment with a functional practitioner is rarely rushed and often at least an hour long so they can spend time listening to their patient's stories, symptoms and questions. Functional doctors focus on the uniqueness of the individual, often creating customized plans for healing. With thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory disease, this is the best approach if you're looking for medical support.

Find a doctor that knows more than the standard thyroid testing & protocols

A common challenge for thyroid and autoimmune sufferers is misdiagnosis or not even being diagnosed at all. If your doctor is only willing to give you the standard thyroid tests and only treatment option is medication, he/she probably doesn't have a lot of experience with reversing thyroid disease.

Ask your doctor the following questions, "How do you evaluate thyroid disease?" If they say they look to see if TSH levels are outside of the normal range, it's time to find a doctor who understands thyroid health. Other questions to ask, "Can thyroid disease be reversed?" "How do you treat thyroid dysfunction?" "Do you regularly test for thyroid antibodies?" If his/her answer is "no," to reversing thyroid disease or testing for antibodies, that's a clear sign you need to find a functional doctor who understands the thyroid and all the systems involved in healing.

Find a doctor who will listen

Does your doctor listen when you discuss your symptoms, ask about alternatives for healing, or want your medication changed? Does he/she honor the request if you ask for a certain blood test or exam to be run? Does the doctor give thoughtful responses to your questions or is your doctor constantly interrupting you? Instead, find a doctor whose core value is to listen. You will often be able to tell by reading his/her website or descriptions of his/her medical practice.

Find a doctor who will coordinate with other doctors and complementary practitioners

In addition to proper nutritional advice, thyroid and autoimmune sufferers can benefit from a variety of complementary therapies such as acupuncture, Reiki, health coaching, craniosacral work and massage therapy.

It's important that your doctor is willing to work with a health coach, nutritionist, acupuncturist, etc. to get you the best care possible. No doctor knows everything and each of us deserves and needs a healing team to help us with all aspects of our health. A doctor shouldn't feel threatened by working with other supportive health practitioners. If your doctor gives you push back if you suggest working as a team with other specialists and practitioners, it's time to find a better partner for your health care.

Look for a doctor who will shed some light

Does the doctor explain his/her reasoning for a particular test or protocol? Is he/she open about recommendations, your healing plan or side effects of thyroid and other medications? Are you able to easily get copies of your test results and doctor's notes when you request them? A doctor should be open and thorough about recommendations, protocols and test results with you. You should have easy access to your records without having to jump through hoops.

Although finding the right doctor to support you with thyroid and autoimmune might feel like a daunting task, it's worth doing your due diligence to find the right fit. Having a compassionate, caring and knowledgeable doctor can be the difference between suffering and true healing.

Take your time and don't settle for less than the best when it comes to your health.

GETTING THE BLOOD TESTS YOU NEED

When I started my journey into healing Hashimoto's disease, I thought only a doctor could order my blood tests. After so many expensive trips to the doctor, where I paid for the office visit to get the tests ordered, then when I paid for the blood tests to be drawn, then when I paid again to see my doctor to get my results, I decided I'd had enough. So I cut out the middle man.

Now, this isn't something I'd recommend that everyone do. I made it my personal mission to reverse my Hashimoto's disease so I had been studying it, researching it, learning how to read my own blood test results and asking my doctors to help me understand what each result meant. I also learned to review my blood tests through a functional medical perspective so I could see the patterns of the imbalances in my body.

Over the past few years, I've acquired some great "street smarts" when it comes to thyroid disease and blood tests.

Armed with my knowledge and experiences, I decided to order blood tests when I felt I needed them for the things I wanted to check. I've heard plenty of horror stories from clients and thyroid forum participants who have asked their doctor to check for Hashimoto's or Grave's or other thyroid markers, only to receive a condescending pat on the head and to hear, "You don't need that. Your TSH levels are fine." ARGH – HOW FRUSTRATING! That's why I think it's important to be an informed and empowered patient.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR HEALTH BACK INTO YOUR OWN HANDS.

Now, I'm not recommending you forgo medical treatment or getting your doctor's opinion. Let's face it, most people don't have the time or desire to become fluent in thyroid blood panels and related markers. I'm not advocating that you start diagnosing yourself or that you try to read your blood tests without a doctor's supervision.

However, if your voice is not being heard, your doctor is refusing to listen to you, and you believe there are some tests that could give you more info about your health or explain some of your symptoms, it's time go out there and get your own blood test taken. How do you do that, you ask? It's simple.

1. Go to [Direct Labs](#) and order the blood tests you'd like. You'll pay for the order up front (you can often submit these charges to insurance). From there, you'll receive a doctor's order for your blood tests that you can take to a local lab. (If you get confused, Direct Labs customer service department is very friendly and helpful if you need assistance.)
2. Schedule an appointment with your local lab. I like [Lab Corp](#) the best but there are others. Find a nice, clean local lab and bring your order from Direct Labs. Lab Corp definitely takes insurance so often I don't have to pay anything up front. *Also note, it's best to schedule an appointment with them to cut down on wait time.
3. Direct Labs will send you an email letting you know your results are ready. Get your results. If you understand the results, that's great. If not, take them to your doctor or another trusted health care expert for review.

For a quick idea of whether thyroid levels are in the "normal" or "functional" ranges, check the guide **Optimal Ranges for Blood Test Markers including Thyroid Panels** below.

That's it. It's easy. It's painless. It isn't the cheapest option but if you're tired of relying on someone else to get you the tests you need and want, this is a great second option.

IT'S ALL CONNECTED

What do your gut and your thyroid have in common? Everything, actually.

When you think about it, your gut is a major player in your immune system; it's responsible for bringing good particles—like food and water—into the body and keeping bad particles—like toxins and germs—out.

The problem happens when this system becomes compromised. In leaky gut syndrome, large protein molecules that aren't supposed to get into the bloodstream, break through the intestinal barrier and enter the blood. The body recognizes that they aren't supposed to be there and starts an immune response. Studies have shown that these stepped-up immune responses play a role in autoimmune disorders like Hashimoto's, where the immune system starts attacking the thyroid and other parts of the body.

In addition, a large portion of T4 (about 20%) is converted to T3 in the intestinal tract, and that process requires an enzyme produced by healthy gut bacteria.

In other words: If your gut isn't healthy, your thyroid suffers. But you can love your thyroid by loving your body (and gut!) enough to feed it the foods it needs and leave off the toxins it doesn't.

If you haven't already purchased [The Radical TLC Solution Home Healing Program](#), I urge you to check it out. You can be well on your way to healing your gut and your thyroid in just six weeks!

RETHINKING NORMAL RANGES

So you had a test and you're "in the normal range." I'm sad to say, welcome to the club. Twelve doctors and two hospitals tested my thyroid and my levels were always in the "normal" ranges.

Fortunately, I finally received a comprehensive thyroid panel from a functional physician, which tested numerous factors that I'd never even heard about before. That is how I was finally diagnosed with Hashimoto's Thyroiditis.

I hadn't known that, while there are "normal lab values" for blood tests, there are also "FUNCTIONAL" or "OPTIMAL" values which actually tell you far more about your what's going on with your body (especially the thyroid). My TSH, T3, T4 and other basic thyroid levels have ALWAYS been in the "normal" range. However, when I was sick, they were not in the OPTIMAL ranges. Below is a list of functional/optimal ranges for thyroid markers. Find your latest blood test results and compare to the chart below.

(For more on the problems with standard lab ranges, watch this [great presentation](#) by Dr. Bryan Walsh)

TEST NAME	OPTIMAL/ FUNCTIONAL RANGE	NORMAL RANGE
TSH	1.3 – 1.8 uIU/ml or 1.5 – 2.2 uIU/ml	.5 - 5.0 uIU/ml
Free T3 or FT3	3.2-3.3 pg/ml	2.3 – 4.2 pg/ml
Free T4 or FT4	1.2 – 1.3 ng/dl	.8 – 1.8 ng/dl
Resin T3 Uptake	28 -38 mg/dL	22-39 mg/dL
Total T4 or TT4	5.4-11.5 ug/d	6-12 ug/d
Free Thyroxine Index or FTI	1.2-4.9 mg/dl	4.6-10.9 mg/dl
Thyroxine Binding Globulin or TBG	18 -27 ug/dl	15 -30 ug/dl
TPO Antibody (auto-antibodies)	< 15	<15
Glucose	85 – 100 mg/dL	65 - 115 mg/dL
Uric Acid	Male: 3.7 – 6.0 mg/dL Female: 3.2 – 5.5 mg/dL	2.2 - 7.7 mg/dL
BUN	13 – 18 mg/dL	5 – 25 mg/dL
Creatinine	0.7 – 1.1 mg/dL	0.6 - 1.5 mg/dL
Sodium	135 – 140 mmol/L	135 – 145 mmol/L
Potassium	4.0 – 4.5 mmol/L	3.5 - 5.3 mmol/L
Chloride	100 – 106 mmol/L	97 – 107 mmol/L
Carbon Dioxide	25 -30 mmol/L	23 – 32 mmol/L
Anion Gap	7 – 12 mmol/L	6 – 16 mmol/L
Calcium	9.2 – 10.1 mg/dL	8.5-10.8 mg/dL
Phosphorus	3.5 – 4.0 mg/dL	2.5-4.5 mg/dL
Magnesium	2.0 – 2.5 mg/dL	1.5-2.3 mg/dL
Total Protein	6.9 – 7.4 G/dL	6.0-8.5 G/dL
Albumin	4.0 – 5.0 G/dL	3.5-5.5 G/dL
Globulin	2.4 – 2.8 G/dL	2.0-3.9 G/dL
A/G Ratio	1.5 – 2.0 Units	1.1 - 2.5 Units
Total Bilirubin	0.2 – 1.2 mg/dL	.1 - 1.2 mg/dL
Alk.Phosphatase	70 – 90 U/L	25 – 120 U/L
LDH	140 – 180 U/L	1 – 240 U/L
AST (SGOT)	10 – 26 U/L	0 – 40 U/L
ALT (SGPT)	10 – 26 U/L	0 – 45 U/L
GGTP	10 – 26 U/L	1 – 70 U/L
Serum Iron	85 – 130 mcg/dL	30 – 170 mcg/dL

TEST NAME	OPTIMAL/ FUNCTIONAL RANGE	NORMAL RANGE
Cholesterol	150 – 200 mg/dL * de- pending on philosophy 150-220 is also optimal	130-200 mg/dL
Triglycerides	75 – 100 mg/dL	30-150 mg/dL
HDL Cholesterol	More than 55 mg/dL	40-90 mg/dL
LDL Cholesterol	Less than 120mg/dl	60-130 mg/dL
Chol/HDL Ratio	Less than 3.1	---
WBC	5.0 – 8.0	3.7-11.0
RBC	Female: 3.9 – 4.4 Male: 4.2 – 4.9	Female: 3.8 – 5.1 Male: 4.6 - 6.0
Hemoglobin	Female: 13.5 – 14.5 Male: 14 – 15	Female: 11.5-15.0 Male: 12.5-17.0
Hematocrit	Female: 37 – 44 Male: 40 – 48	Female: 34-44 Male: 36-50
MCV	85 – 92 cu microns	80-98
MCH	27 – 32 cu microns	27-34
MCHC	32 – 35%	32 – 36 %
RDW	Less than 13	11.7 - 15
Platelets	150,000 – 450,000	155,000 - 385,000
Neutrophils	40 – 60%	35 – 74%
Lymphocytes	25 – 40%	14 – 46%
Monocytes	Less than 7%	4 – 13%
Eosinophils	Less than 3%	0 – 7%
Basophils	0 – 1%	0 – 3%
Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (Sed Rate)	Males: <5mm/hour Females: <10 mm/hour	Males: 0-15 mm/ hour Females: 0-20 mm/ hour

DO I HAVE A THYROID PROBLEM?

An estimated 20 million people have a thyroid problem, the majority of them undiagnosed. The thyroid affects so many parts of the body, no wonder it's hard to pin down all the symptoms and get a diagnosis. Here are a few of the most common issues connected to thyroid and autoimmune disorders:

- Frequent Headaches
- Palpitations
- Heat intolerance
- Nervousness
- Sleep Apnea
- Insomnia
- Breathlessness
- Fatigue
- Fast heart rate
- Trembling hands
- Weight loss
- Muscle weakness
- Warm moist skin
- Infertility
- Hair loss
- Staring gaze
- Less stamina and energy than others
- Inability to hold children for very long
- Weakness or Aching bones/muscles
- Chronic Low Grade Depression
- Often feeling cold, cold hands and feet
- High or rising cholesterol
- Diarrhea/Constipation
- No eyebrows or thinning outer eyebrows
- Dry Hair/Hair Loss/Going gray early
- Low to no libido
- Chills
- Requires naps in the afternoon
- Inability to concentrate or read long periods of time
- Forgetfulness/Foggy thinking
- Inability to lose weight
- Too Heavy/Light menstrual periods
- Allergies
- Migraines
- Sore feet (plantar fasciitis)
- colitis
- IBS (irritable bowel syndrome)
- painful bladder
- Broken/peeling fingernails
- Dry skin or snake skin
- Ringing in ears/ Dizziness from inner ear issues
- Lactose Intolerance
- Inability to eat in the mornings
- PMS/Painful periods
- Joint pain and Carpal tunnel symptoms
- No Appetite
- Blood Pressure Issues
- Varicose Veins
- Raised temperature
- Tightness in throat; sore throat
- Acne on face and in unusual places
- Swelling/edema/puffiness
- High Blood Pressure
- Dry cracking skin

And the list goes on...You may not even have realized that some of the symptoms you were experiencing were related to your thyroid. Since this program aims at being holistic, I want to help you alleviate all your symptoms, not just the most pressing ones. Brittle fingernails and acne may seem like the least of your worries when you find out you have a thyroid problem, but they are all interconnected.

If you noticed symptoms on this list that apply to you—but that you'd never attributed to your thyroid—I hope you will create a comprehensive list that you can discuss with your doctor and so that you can monitor each and every one on your journey to healing.

Special Note: [HypothyroidMom](#) has one of the most extensive symptom lists around and a lovely online community as well. Check out [this link](#) and make sure to compile a list of all your symptoms for your doctor. You may even want to print this out and just circle what is ailing you so the doctor understands its not "all in your head."

IS THYROID MEDICATION THE PROBLEM?

I am struck by the number of clients or people participating in thyroid forums who complain that after years of being on conventional and popular thyroid medications that their symptoms have increasingly become worse. When they've gone to their physician to discuss their symptoms and problems, the doctor's response is to increase the dosage of the medication. But the fact is, that just doesn't work for true healing.

We've talked about the fact that the thyroid produces T3 and T4 hormones. What is important to know here is that Active T3 is what is used by our cells to produce energy and protective steroid hormones. Our thyroid only makes 10% of the active T3 we need to function properly. The rest of the Active T3 (the other 90%) is created when T4 gets converted in the liver.

Here's where the problem lies: most of the conventional medications out there (Synthroid, Levoxyl, Levothyroxine, etc.) supplement T4; not T3.

So what happens? Oftentimes, this excess of T4 causes a buildup effect and actually slows your thyroid even further creating increasing hypothyroid symptoms. When the doctor ups your dosage, he/she is just adding fuel to the fire.

So what can be done? Well, the most crucial part to healing is to discover the underlying cause of your symptoms. Simply masking your symptoms with medication doesn't actually cure you of thyroid disorder or autoimmune/inflammatory disease. When your body gives you signals that manifest as symptoms, it is important to observe them and get to the root of that symptom,

work holistically with your body, and retrain your system to function properly. I'm not going to lie – it takes time. It's definitely not as easy as taking a pill and having some symptom relief but it's better than the proverbial "band-aid."

Taking a holistic approach provides support to your body so it can remember its natural state; so it can perform optimally once again. Finding the right support is key. Seek out help from people who will listen, give you the respect you deserve and honor the validity of your symptoms.

WHY THYROID MEDICATION MAY BE NECESSARY

That isn't to say that thyroid medication is evil, or that no one should use it. In the case of hypothyroidism with elevated TSH, replacement therapy is often needed because the body simply isn't producing enough thyroid hormone to meet your metabolic needs and keep your body functioning properly.

But, in my opinion, medication should always be part of a broader strategy that includes fixing your gut, balancing your blood sugars, and de-stressing your adrenals. You should also carefully monitor your hormone levels with your doctor and adjust your medications accordingly, because it could be that as you begin to heal the rest of your body, your thyroid will produce more hormones on its own, and you will require less replacement therapy.

THE TESTS THAT COUNT

Blood Tests

Below is a chart you can provide your doctor or use to order your tests directly.

TLC RECOMMENDED BLOOD TESTS FOR INTIAL ASSESMENT:

Please fast 8-10 hours prior to taking the blood test. It's best to take it first thing in the morning. Drink lots of water before taking the exam

BASIC PANELS:	THYROID SPECIFIC PANELS:
CMP	TSH
Lipid Plus/Direct LDL	Reverse T3
Urinalysis	Free T3
CBC with differential	Free T4
Vitamin D, 25 OH, 125 OH	Antithyroglobulin AB (TgAb)**
Serum Iron	Thyroid Peroxidase Antibody (TPO)**
Ferritin	Thyroid Stimulating Immunoglobulin (TSI)**
LDH	Thyroxine Binding Globulin (TBG)**
Magnesium	
Uric Acid	**valuable tests which most conventional practitioners ignore. Get these tests!
Phosphorous	
ESR	
DHEA Sulfate	
GGTP	
CRP	
HBA1C	
Homocysteine	
CPK Total	
Serum Osteocalcin	
Alkaline Phosphatase Isoenzymes (Intestine/Hepatic/Bone Isoenzyme percentages)	

- **CMP**—Used to evaluate how the kidneys and liver are functioning, the body's electrolyte and fluid balance and sugar and protein levels in the blood. Many people suffering with thyroid or autoimmune disease have a sluggish liver. This will let you know if your kidney or liver needs support.
- **Lipid Plus/Direct LDL**—Measures total cholesterol, triglyceride levels, HDL (happy cholesterol) and LDL cholesterol as well as ratio of cholesterol to HDL, ratio of LDL to HDL and VLDL. To decode what all this means, check out Chris Kresser's program, The High Cholesterol Action Plan. Having high cholesterol can be an indicator of thyroid dysfunction.
- **Urinalysis**—Can detect and assess a wide range of disorders and involves examining the appearance, concentration and content of urine. It can detect diabetes and kidney disease. Diabetes would illustrate the need to balance blood sugar better (as mentioned above). As the kidneys is one of the detox pathways in the body, it's important to know how they are functioning.
- **CBC with differential**—Used to evaluate your overall health and detect a wide range of disorders and measures red blood cells, white blood cells, hemoglobin, hematocrit and platelets. This is a helpful test because it can show the presence of anemia which is a common symptom of someone with thyroid or autoimmune disease.
- **Vitamin D, 25 (OH) D**—Raise your hand if you have a thyroid problem and a very low Vitamin D level. My hand used to be raised, that's for sure. Autoimmune disease and low vitamin D levels seem to go hand in hand. Get your vitamin D level checked. The optimal range is 50–70. If you're below that, you'll want to supplement for a period of time until your body begins absorbing it well from the sun.
- **Serum Iron**—Tests the level of iron in your serum to see if there are any issues with your iron levels which can show up as fatigue, muscle weakness or headaches.
- **Ferritin**—A ferritin blood test checks the amount of ferritin in the blood. This test will indicate if you are iron deficient or anemic which is a common challenge for thyroid sufferers.
- **LDH**—Screens for tissue damage which may include liver disease and certain types of anemia. As mentioned above, thyroid sufferers may be challenged by liver blockages and anemia.
- **Magnesium**—Checks the level of magnesium in the blood which is an electrolyte important to proper nerve, muscle and enzyme function. This test is performed to monitor kidney function, muscle weakness, symptoms like low blood pressure, nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, labored breathing and for heart health.

- **Uric Acid**—Determines how much uric acid is present in your blood and helps predict kidney issues or gout.
- **Phosphorous**—Assess phosphorus levels in the blood. Phosphorous helps you process energy in the body, supports muscle and nerve functioning and form healthy bones (including teeth). It's an important test for the thyroid sufferer as it monitors conditions like kidney, gastrointestinal and nutrition disorders as well as calcium and bone issues.
- **ESR (or sed rate)**—Measures how much inflammation is in the body.
- **DHEA Sulfate**—Is a water-soluble hormone produced by the adrenal glands. Low levels could indicate heart or kidney disease. DHEA levels have been linked to autoimmune disease. It is used as a building block for hormones like testosterone and estrogen which can affect hair loss and weight gain.
- **GGTP**—Is a liver function test that can also be helpful in indicating hypo- or hyperthyroidism.
- **CRP (or C-reactive protein)**—Tests for inflammation in the body. While it doesn't indicate where the inflammation is occurring, it does let you know if your body is inflamed. Correlations have been made with heart disease for people with high CRP levels and low thyroid function. This is a good test to take to understand how much inflammation may be affecting you so you can make the necessary supportive dietary and lifestyle changes.
- **HBA1C**—Determines how high your blood sugar has been in the past few months and can indicate if you're headed toward diabetes. Often times, people with thyroid disease have blood sugar imbalances which can quickly snowball into diabetes. This test is also a good indicator how you're managing diabetes if you already have it.
- **Homocysteine**—Identifies if you have a folic acid or B12 deficiency. B12 deficiency is common amongst thyroid sufferers.
- **CPK Total**—Assesses damage to tissue in the brain, muscle tissue, or heart. CPK or creatine phosphokinase leaks from tissue into the blood when tissue is damaged. It is also used to evaluate muscle damage. As there is a link to thyroid dysfunction and heart disease, it's good to keep an eye on this level from time to time.
- **Alkaline Phosphatase Isoenzymes**—This test is used to diagnose bone disease, liver, gallbladder or bile duct disease, parathyroid gland issues, vitamin D deficiency and to check liver function to see how medicines you take may affect the liver. This can be handy information for your doctor (hopefully a doctor who practices functional medicine) in order to assess imbalances in the body's functions.

Stool Tests

As I mentioned before, your gut plays a very important role in achieving optimal thyroid health. A whopping 70 percent of your immune system resides in your gut (gastrointestinal tract) which controls digestion, elimination, detoxification, nutrient absorption, hormone metabolism and energy production. Add to that, almost all (99%) of brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters in your body are created in your intestine. Your gut gives you a lot of love so you need to make sure it gets the TLC it deserves.

And, as we know, T4 must be converted to T3 to be used in the body—and most of this conversion takes place in your intestines with the help of your beneficial gut flora.

One of the best ways to determine if your digestive tract needs some TLC is to complete a stool analysis (usually ordered by your functional medicine physician). Stool tests are vital for everyone who has Hashimoto's (autoimmune) thyroiditis because of possible triggers in the gut.

A stool analysis will indicate if you have any infections that could be affecting the thyroid gland, if you have any yeast overgrowth (candida), how well you are digesting food, if you are absorbing nutrients from the food you are eating, if you have IBS and if there are parasites, fungus, and/or mold present. Some stool analyses can test for gluten intolerance as well. Stool tests can also reveal if you have intestinal dysbiosis which is basically an imbalance in the bacterial colonies in the gut. The doctor I worked with to order my stool analysis likes to use two different labs simultaneously for testing. Some labs are good at looking at assessing absorption while other labs are better at detecting parasites. His choice for stool analysis are [Doctor's Data](#) and [BioHealth](#). I believe with both labs, you may need a doctor to order your tests.

Saliva Tests

As we've discussed, the health of your adrenal glands plays a big part in the health of your thyroid, and the easiest test to determine how your adrenal glands are functioning is a simple saliva test.

Basically, you spit into a test tube four times over the course of the day, and then the lab measures different hormone levels including the stress hormones DHEA and cortisol in your saliva. It can also check estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone levels.

Knowing your levels of these hormones can be very important, because cortisol is necessary to sensitize thyroid receptors. Too little or too much can negatively affect your thyroid's activity. Likewise, too much estrogen can depress thyroid function, too. A great lab to get a functional adrenal saliva test through is [BioHealth](#).

RESOURCES — BEST BOOKS, PRODUCTS & ONLINE SUPPORT

In going through my own health journey with Hashimoto's, I did a lot of research, read a lot of books, and tried a whole heckuva lot of products in trying to figure out what worked best. That's awesome news for you, because I've done a lot of the leg work for you! Check out the links below to discover my favorite places for online support, books that will supplement this program and increase your understanding of your condition, products I use daily to support my healing, and tutorials I've produced to help get you on your way to health.

[Best Online Support](#)

[Books I love](#)

[Products I love](#)

[TLC Tutorials](#)

If your experience of health care has been frustrating and impersonal, with rushed office visits, a trickle of information and an avalanche of prescriptions, then prepare yourself for something quite different when you work with a health coach. Thyroid Loving Care raises the bar on thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory disease care. My holistic approach means taking the time to know you, to address your unique mind, body and spirit to resolve disorders that some mistakenly consider "incurable."

I work at your side every step of the way, collaborating with you through in-person, phone or skype sessions. We begin by reviewing all facets of your emotional and physical well being, addressing everything from your diet and daily routines to stress levels and relationships. Your body already has an opinion on each one. We tune in and listen—because that's the first step to helping your body heal itself.

Next, we create a clear action plan, customized to your lifestyle and your body's specific needs, triggers and sensitivities—because true healing is never a one-size-fits-all journey. Each program also includes a plan for regular self-care, mindfulness, nutritional support and the gentle, ongoing lifestyle that I've found essential to thyroid and immune system healing.

COMPLEX PROBLEMS NEED LOVING SOLUTIONS.



There is no silver bullet or quick fix to thyroid, autoimmune or inflammatory diseases. If I find one, I will shout it to the world!

What I do know is that if we follow tried and true healing processes, customizing them to suit your unique body, mind and life, then you can dramatically alter how you feel. With consistency and a dash of self-love, you can reduce or even eliminate thyroid, autoimmune and inflammatory dysfunction as I have done.

There's nothing easy about thyroid disease. How I wish it were as simple as taking a pill or purchasing a product! It can be a complicated, messy road to recovery that you and I know all too well.

But I'm here to tell you that there is hope! There is a light at the end of the tunnel. You have already made a huge leap forward toward recovery by investing in and reading this book. Knowledge is power, and you are powering up to take back your life from this condition!

Of course, this is just the first step. I know the road ahead may seem challenging, but I want you to know that I will be with you every step of the way whether you join me on my blog or decide to invest in personal coaching. My life's work is to support you in your healing. Thank you for taking the first steps here with me, and may that light of healing shine brighter on you every day!

 Jen