

Hyperthyroidism

What is hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism happens when the thyroid gland makes too much thyroid hormone. Having too much of this hormone causes many symptoms. You may:

- Be anxious, tired, or sleepless.
- Feel shaky.
- Feel sweaty and hot.
- Be short of breath.
- Have a hard time focusing your eyes.
- Lose weight.
- Notice your thyroid gland is swollen (goiter).

You may have other problems. Here are some of them:

- Your eyeballs may stick out.
- You may not be able to tolerate heat.
- Your heart may beat faster.
- You may want to eat more often.
- You may have diarrhea.

This disease can cause heart failure and death if it is not treated.

How do I know if I have hyperthyroidism?

Your health care provider will:

- Ask about your symptoms.
- Give you an exam.
- Order lab tests or other tests. These tests will find out how much hormone your thyroid gland is making and how well the thyroid gland is working.

How is it treated?

There are several choices for treating hyperthyroidism:

- Medication.

- Radiation.
- Surgery.

You can take medicine that helps your thyroid gland make less hormone.

- In a couple of months, you should be doing better.
- You may have to take the medicine for a year or more.

You may be treated with radiation. If the disease comes back and you need more radiation, there is a chance you may start making too little thyroid hormone. This problem can then be treated with medicine.

All or part of the thyroid gland can be taken out by surgery. Surgery cures the disease almost all of the time. You may have too little thyroid hormone after the surgery. You will then most likely need to take thyroid hormone the rest of your life.

Eye problems caused by hyperthyroidism often continue even after your thyroid problem is treated.

How can I take care of myself?

- Make sure you follow your health care provider's advice.
- Do not stop taking your medicine or change the way you are taking it without talking to your health care provider first.