The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland situated at the front side of the neck, right below the Adam’s apple. Although small in size, it has a huge impact on almost all the metabolic processes that take place in the body. Two most common problems of the thyroid gland – namely hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism, involve abnormal production of thyroid hormones. The main difference between hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism is that the former is caused by underproduction of thyroid hormone while the latter is caused by overproduction of thyroid hormone. But proper diagnosis and treatment and following a balanced diet chart can manage these problems successfully.

What is Hypothyroidism?

Before getting on with the list of foods to eat and avoid in hypothyroidism, it is important to know what hypothyroidism is. Well, hypothyroidism is a disorder caused by underactive thyroid gland. It is a condition in which the thyroid gland fails to produce enough thyroid hormone for normal functioning of the body.
Thyroid hormones control the process of metabolism which in turn affects the heartbeat, body temperature and calorie burning capacity. Insufficient production of thyroid hormone causes the body processes to slow down, thereby making the body weak and the metabolism sluggish. Some of the usual symptoms of hypothyroidism are weight gain, fatigue, dry skin, constipation, thin hair and brittle fingernails, weakness, slow heart rate.

7 Best Foods to Include in a Hypothyroidism Diet

There is obviously no supplement for medication in case of thyroid disorders, but eating certain foods can help in improving the functions if the thyroid glands and regulate metabolism, heart rate, mood, body temperature and blood pressure.

Fish

Fish is the first and most important food item in the list of healthy foods for the natural treatment for hypothyroidism because of its essential fatty acids content. The healthy omega 3 fatty acids present in oily fishes like salmon, tuna, sardines and trout helps to reduce inflammation, improve immune power and lower the risk of heart diseases in people suffering from hypothyroidism.
In addition, fish is a wonderful source of selenium which is most concentrated in the thyroid gland and improves its functions.

Nuts

No need to worry about sudden food cravings when you have such healthy snacks to munch on. Nuts are another amazing source of selenium that makes them an important food to be included in the diet for thyroid disorder. Some of the healthiest nuts which are loaded with selenium are Brazil nuts, hazelnuts and macadamia nuts that help in maintaining proper functions of the thyroid gland.
Eating just one or two Brazil nuts every day is enough to get the daily nutrients but in case of other nuts a small handful should be the daily serving. But you should always be careful about the portion size because nuts are high in fat.

Antioxidant-Rich Fruits and Vegetables

A fruit and vegetable detox diet plan is exceptionally popular among health conscious people because these foods help cleanse the system and flush out toxins from the body. But antioxidant rich fruits and vegetables are extremely beneficial for controlling hypothyroidism as well. They work almost like natural remedies for hypothyroidism by controlling weight gain – one of the main hypothyroid symptoms.

Fruits and vegetables which are especially high in nutrients such as antioxidants and B vitamins benefit the workings of the thyroid gland. Some of the best antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables to eat for hypothyroidism are blueberries, cherries, bell peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, etc.

Whole Grains

One of the common signs of hypothyroidism is unexplained constipation, and one of the best ways to solve this problem without the use of laxatives is the addition of some fiber to the diet in the form of whole grains. Some of the healthiest whole grains are brown rice, quinoa, bulgur, oats, etc., and although most of us use oatmeal for weight loss purposes, only it can also help normalize and regularize bowel movement.
But, it is important to take your thyroid medications several hours before or after eating fiber-rich foods because fiber can interfere with thyroid medications.

Fortified Dairy Products

One of the most common causes of hypothyroidism is the Hashimoto’s disease, which is associated with vitamin D deficiency.

Fortified milk and dairy products like yogurt, curd, cottage cheese not only contain added vitamin D but also other nutrients like iodine, proteins and calcium – all of which are helpful for controlling the symptoms of hypothyroidism.
Beans

We are all aware of the amazing bean sprouts health benefits, but not many know that beans are beneficial for treating hypothyroidism as well. People suffering from hypothyroidism often feel drained and tired. Beans are a wonderful source of sustained energy that contains antioxidants, proteins, complex carbs, vitamins, and minerals. Moreover, which beans there are numerous varieties to try from.

You can add beans to soups, salads, stews and side dishes to enhance the taste.

Seaweed

Seaweed is a rich source of iodine – an essential nutrient for thyroid function that works like a precursor for the production of thyroid hormone.
Seaweed varieties such as dulse, nori and wakame can be used in soups and salads, and it works better than iodine supplements. In addition, seaweed also contains calcium, fiber, and vitamins A, B, C, E and K.

7 Foods to Avoid in a Hypothyroidism Diet

Hypothyroidism is a tricky health condition and the foods you eat have a huge impact on the treatment. There are certain foods that inhibit the body’s capacity to absorb the replacement hormones that are part of the thyroid treatment. Eating smart will help you to feel better and control the symptoms in a successful manner. Here are the 7 foods to avoid with hypothyroidism.

Soy Products

Thyroid symptoms in women can be controlled by limiting the consumption of soy and soy-based products. The phytoestrogens present in soybean and soy-rich foods inhibit the functions of the enzyme thyroid peroxidase that forms the thyroid hormone.
Consuming too many soy products may increase a person’s risk of developing hypothyroidism. The worst thing is that the goitrogenic activity of soy isoflavones is not destroyed even by cooking.

**Cruciferous Vegetables**

Although eating *fruits and vegetables to lose weight* is really effective, a certain group of vegetables—specifically cruciferous vegetables can have negative effects on the functions of the thyroid gland. Cruciferous vegetables block the gland’s ability to absorb iodine which is necessary for normal thyroid function.

People suffering from hypothyroidism should limit the intake of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, bok choy, turnips, etc. However, cooking these vegetables can reduce their goitrogenic effect.
Gluten

Gluten is a particular type of protein found in processed forms of grains like wheat, barley, rye, etc. and people with gluten intolerance are recommended to avoid gluten rich foods. People with hypothyroidism should also consider limiting the intake of gluten because it can irritate the small intestine and hinder absorption of thyroid hormones from replacement medication.

But you can consume a limited quantity of whole grains like brown rice, multi-grain bread, and pasta in order to improve bowel irregularity.

Fatty Foods

Unhealthy fats such as transfats and saturated fatty acids destroys the body’s capacity to absorb thyroid hormones from replacement medicines. Fats also interfere with the thyroid gland’s ability to produce the hormones as well.
Therefore, it is best to cut out all types of fatty foods and fried foods like French fries, chips, fried chicken, butter, margarine, mayonnaise and fatty cuts of meat like prime rib and bacon.

Processed Foods

Processed foods and ready to eat meals are usually high in sodium and people with hypothyroidism should stay away from sodium. Processed foods such as cookies, cakes, pasta, bread, and pretzels increase not only blood sugar levels but also blood pressure.

People with hypothyroidism are already at risk of developing hypertension and sodium-rich foods only make things worse. People with risk of high blood pressure should limit their sodium intake to 1500 milligrams per day.

Sugary Foods

Hypothyroidism affects the body’s metabolism and causes it to slow down thereby promoting weight gain, so a person with hypothyroidism should be really careful about fatty and sugary foods. Therefore, a hypothyroidism diet should be free from sugar because sugar has lots of empty calories and no nutrients.
Even sugar substitute Aspartame should also be avoided because excessive intake of aspartame promotes the onset of Graves’ disease, which causes thyroid problems by turning the immune system against the thyroid gland.

Alcohol and Caffeine

Alcohol wreaks havoc on the functions of the thyroid gland and the levels of thyroid hormone in the body. Alcohol has a noxious effect on the thyroid gland, and it suppresses the capacity of the body to use the thyroid hormone in an effective manner. Therefore, it is best to cut out the consumption of alcohol completely for best results.
We all know about the numerous disadvantages of coffee and it has been seen that caffeine also hampers the healing properties of the thyroid medications by preventing the absorption of the medicines in the intestine.

What is Hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is yet another common thyroid disorder caused by the overactive thyroid gland. In this case, the thyroid glands produce abnormally high levels of thyroid hormone and release it into the bloodstream which leads to rapid heartbeat, muscle weakness, hyperactivity, sudden weight loss and increased appetite.

There are numerous causes of hyperthyroidism, and some of the conditions include Graves’ disease, toxic adenoma, Plummer’s disease and thyroiditis. Hyperthyroidism can be successfully treated with medication, radiotherapy and surgery.

Top 5 Healthy Foods to be Included in the Hyperthyroidism Diet

In this list, you might notice that certain foods that are harmful to hypothyroidism are beneficial in case of hyperthyroidism. Following a well-balanced diet rich in necessary nutrients can help manage and prevent hyperthyroidism effectively. Let us check out the 5 best foods to eat for hyperthyroidism.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids

This is one of the most important nutrients that is necessary for controlling the symptoms of hyperthyroidism, but the human body cannot produce this nutrient on its own and, therefore, it has to be supplemented with foods. It helps to balance the endocrine system and help to maintain thyroid levels in the body.
Fish is an amazing source of omega 3 fatty acids. Those who are not into fish can get this nutrient from nuts, olive oil, and flaxseed oil.

**Vitamin D Rich Foods**

Our bones are in a continuous state of regeneration and turnover in which old bones are worn out and replaced by new growth. But prolonged untreated hyperthyroidism speeds up this natural turnover process such that bone degeneration out spaces deposition of new bone and this imbalance leads to reduces bone strength and increased risk of bone fracture.

Vitamin D is a vital nutrient for bone health so increased intake of vitamin D-rich foods such as fortified milk, and fatty fish helps to improve bone strength.

**Protein-rich Foods**

Proteins are not only necessary for a healthy bodybuilding diet; they are equally important for managing hyperthyroidism as well. Abnormal weight loss is a common symptom of hyperthyroidism, therefore, eating enough protein is necessary in order to ensure healthy body weight and maintain muscle mass.
Chicken, turkey, eggs and fish are the best non-vegetarian sources of protein. Vegetarians can get their daily dose of protein from beans, lentils and nuts. Each and every meal of a hyperthyroid diet must include protein-rich foods.

Dairy Products

Untreated hyperthyroidism or Graves’ disease causes bone loss and eventually lead to osteoporosis. Even if the disorder has been treated through medication, the patient will still need calcium in order to rebuild the weak and worn out bones. The best food source of calcium is dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt.
People with lactose intolerance can get plenty of calcium from fortified foods like soy milk, fortified whole grain cereals, bread and fortified orange juice. A person should have at least 3 servings of dairy products on a daily basis.

**Cruciferous Vegetables**

Although cruciferous vegetables are included in the list of foods to avoid in case of hypothyroidism, they have positive effects in case of hyperthyroidism. Vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and kale have a goitrogenic effect which helps to suppress the production of thyroid hormone by the thyroid gland and manage the symptoms of hyperthyroidism successfully.

It is recommend consuming 1 or more serving of cruciferous vegetables every day for best results.
5 Foods to Avoid in a Hyperthyroidism Diet

There are certain hyperthyroidism diet restrictions which help in better management of the condition. Here is a list of foods that should be avoided if a person has thyroid disorders.

Foods High in Iodine

Although iodine rich foods are beneficial for hypothyroidism, they have an opposite effect in the case of hyperthyroidism. The thyroid gland is extremely sensitive to iodine, and a large amount of iodine in foods can further aggravate hyperthyroidism by promoting the gland to produce more thyroxine hormone and speed up metabolism further.

Therefore, it is best to stay away from iodine-rich foods like seaweed, kelp, salt, processed foods and fried foods.

High GI Carbs

Hyperthyroidism interferes with carbohydrate metabolism and blood sugar balance, but it is not a good idea to give up carbohydrates completely because it is the main source of energy for the proper functioning of the body. Therefore, it is best to choose the carbs with great care in order to keep the blood sugar level in the normal range and reduce the risk of diabetes which is strongly linked with thyroid disorder.
Avoid high-glycemic carbohydrates like white flour, sugary foods, and ready to eat breakfast cereals, etc. and opt for fiber-rich carbohydrates such as whole grains, barley, oats, and lentils instead.

Food Allergens

Consuming foods that you are allergic to can worsen the symptoms of hyperthyroidism which may include rashes, abdominal pain and cramps, diarrhea, breathing problems, etc. In addition, these allergens also slow down the recovery process of the disease.
Therefore, it is best to avoid suspected food allergens like gluten, soy, corn and artificial food additives. Choose gluten free starches, instead. A formal test helps identify the foods that a person is allergic to.

Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils

Hydrogenated vegetable oils are one of the main food items that should be avoided if a person has hyperthyroidism. The hydrogenation process makes the oils heavier to digest, and they are mainly used for increasing the texture, color and flavor of foods. But hydrogenated oils are loaded with unhealthy trans fats that have a negative impact on the levels of hormone and cholesterol in the body.

Therefore, it is best to stay away from foods containing hydrogenated vegetable oil like crackers, onion rings, chips, donuts and packed food products.

Caffeine

Caffeine-rich foods like coffee, tea, chocolate and cola aggravates the hyperthyroidism symptoms such as nervousness, anxiety, palpitations, rapid heart rate and weight loss. It also interferes with mood balance, sleep and effectiveness of thyroid medications.
Therefore, doctors recommend staying hydrated by drinking plenty of non-caffeinated drinks like water, lemon water, herbal teas, broth-based soups, fresh fruits and low-fat milk.

So, now that you have some idea about the foods you should eat and avoid in case if thyroid disorders, plan out your diet accordingly and continue with your thyroid medications to lead a healthy life even with hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism.

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