

# Powerful things come in small packages

## Understanding thyroid disease

Quick, name some of the most important parts of the body. The things that keep you up and running day to day. The heart? Sure. The brain? Of course. Were you just about to say the thyroid gland? No?

The fact is, the thyroid could be one of the most underappreciated powerhouses in the human body. Although this butterfly-shaped gland is small, it's mighty. Located just below the Adam's apple, the thyroid produces hormones that help keep your organs, tissues and cells chugging along. The heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin all need the thyroid in order to do their best.<sup>1</sup>

If your thyroid isn't working the way it should, your body may not be either. That's the case for 27 million Americans – more than half of whom are undiagnosed – who are affected by either an overactive (hyperthyroidism) or underactive (hypothyroidism) thyroid.<sup>1</sup> The incidence of thyroid issues increases with age and is more common in women. Family history can play a part, as well. Left untreated, thyroid imbalances can cause high cholesterol, heart disease and a host of other issues, such as osteoporosis and infertility.

### Symptoms of a thyroid imbalance<sup>1,2</sup>

#### Hypothyroidism - underactive thyroid

- Fatigue
- Forgetfulness
- Depression
- Heavy menstrual periods
- Dry, coarse hair
- Dry, coarse skin
- Weight gain
- Mood swings
- Hoarse voice
- Constipation

#### Hyperthyroidism - overactive thyroid

- Heat intolerance, sweating
- Weight loss
- Frequent bowel movements
- Changes in vision
- Fatigue and muscle weakness
- Menstrual disturbance
- Impaired fertility
- Mental or sleep disturbances
- Tremors
- Thyroid enlargement

If you're having symptoms similar to those described above, talk with your doctor.\* He or she may recommend simple blood tests to determine if your thyroid is working properly.

\* Your doctor or other health care provider you may see for medical care and advice

Thyroid imbalances can often be corrected, leaving you feeling healthier, more energetic and ready to power through your day.



Certain factual or statistical information was derived from the following sources:

<sup>1</sup> American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists: [www.aace.com](http://www.aace.com) (September 2009).

<sup>2</sup> WebMD®: [women.webmd.com/picture-of-the-thyroid](http://women.webmd.com/picture-of-the-thyroid) (May 2010).