

Module 5 Lesson 1

Transcript

Today, we're covering the thyroid and hormones. This is a topic I've been asked more and more and more about over the last few years. It's really a hot topic in nutrition, and it's an area that clients are becoming more and more aware of and have more questions about. It can seem intimidating at first to talk about hormones and lab values and get all the abbreviations straight, but if you learn the basics, you'll ultimately be able to better guide your clients towards health. With thyroid issues, it's a team effort with a client's endocrinologist or other medical providers, so you definitely won't be alone here if you're working with people with thyroid issues. Today's lesson is on the prevalence of thyroid issues, because thyroid issues are rampant. I really want you to have a good understanding of that. You see them in the young and the old, the sick and the well, across all economic levels, and in the fit and the out of shape.

In this lesson, you're going to learn all about the importance of thyroid, and why you need to be thinking about it. Why you need to know all this information. I'm going to lay out some statistics, and explain how that little gland in your neck impacts the work we do every single day. So let's get started. I've worked with teenage gymnasts with Hashimoto's, a teacher with hyperthyroid, and a 20 year old with Graves' disease. Thyroid illness does not discriminate. I once had a client come to me just really, really fatigued. She'd gained weight without explanation, and she wanted to see if I could help her get back to her old self. She was really diligent with her diet, and used exercise all the time as a means to control her weight. She was super outdoorsy, loved to cook, and had an amazing foundation in all of her other nutritious life pillars.

I did a thorough intake with her, and found out it had been several years since she'd been to see her doctor just for a regular checkup. She hadn't had a lab panel in years. While her diet could certainly use a little bit of cleaning up, I had a hunch there was something else going on. Something just didn't seem right. She left my office with the homework to go back to her food journal so I could get an even closer look, brush up on her sleep hygiene which was pretty good to begin with, and up her hydration. I asked her to get a routine lab test and a thyroid panel before our next appointment. I just had a hunch that there was something else going on here. It turned out that her thyroid was out of whack, and her labs showed slowed thyroid activity. She had some followup appointments with her doctor who ran some extra labs and it took a little tweaking of her meds, but we were able to get her back to her old self.

If she'd never gone to the doctor and gotten that information and didn't know she was hypothyroid, I'll bet she would not have lost the weight so quickly. She would've probably felt really

stalled in her efforts, and so frustrated that her body wasn't responding as expected. Of course, not every case is as straightforward and easy as this example, but sometimes one little bit of information really makes a huge impact. So just to give you a little quick thyroid refresher, the thyroid is a gland in the middle of the neck. It regulates the body's metabolism, how fast the body produces energy from food and oxygen. Yes, we always preach diet and exercise, but the endocrine system, including the thyroid, has a monster role in our metabolic functioning. We always hear people talk about how they have a fast metabolism or a slow metabolism, or they talk about how they used to have such a fast metabolism and now it's slowed down, or maybe they even say they never had a good metabolism.

This is where your thyroid comes in. Your thyroid works with iodine and thyroid hormones to keep your metabolism, how fast you burn the fuel you consume, working. You don't get much of a choice, and there's really not that much you can do to make your thyroid bump up your metabolic rate, but you need a healthy thyroid so that all of the behavior you do with your diet, with your exercise, with your sleep, with your stress can be the best it can possibly be. When I have a client who's healthy, no thyroid issues, who spends a few days off the wagon for a wedding weekend, let's say, for example, I may not be so concerned. She may drink more than usual at a rehearsal dinner at the wedding, at the brunch the next day. She may miss her usual spin and yoga classes, stay up past midnight, and overindulge in wedding cake, puff pastries, and prime rib.

I'm not going to freak out and let her stress out about that. She'll get right back on track and recover from the setback in a few days, no problem. I'm not going to be able to be so generous with a client who has thyroid disease. The same partying in a client with Graves' disease or hypothyroid can cause serious problems like hypertension and AFib. This client may see extreme changes in energy and nervous system issues like tingling and neuropathy. Consistency in this population is even more important. You know, I always talk about consistency and patience when it comes to health, but in this population it's even more critical. All of this to say that the thyroid is super essential to your energy level, heart rate, and a host of other functions. I'm talking about how often your heart beats, your breathing rate, weight regulation, and virtually all of the things we don't ever think about that your body just takes care of on autopilot.

It is worth it to do a quick blood test, and to recommend your clients do a quick blood test to make sure your thyroid is in good shape if you have any doubts at all. The most common thyroid diseases include hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, Graves' disease, and Hashimoto's, and we'll talk more about them in other lessons. With thyroid conditions on the rise, it's likely that 12% of your clients are going to come to you with a thyroid diagnosis, but so many people are undiagnosed. It's a good idea to keep this in mind and suggest a thyroid checkup if you have a client who hasn't had a

physical in a while. So let's recap here. The thyroid is a gland in the middle of the neck that regulates the body's metabolism through iodine and thyroid hormones. The most common thyroid diseases include hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, Graves' disease, and Hashimoto's. Thyroid conditions are on the rise. And in the next few lessons, we're going to get into more specifics about these conditions, the lab tests that guide diagnoses, your role as a healthcare practitioner, and how you can partner with a client's endocrinologist or other doctor to provide the best possible care for your client. I'll see you in the next lesson.