

## Module 5 Lesson 6

### Transcript

Today we're talking about Hashimoto's disease. Which is sometimes called Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Hashimoto's is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the United States, affecting about 1% to 2% of the US population more often in women than in men. In this lesson, you're going to learn all about this condition, what it is, what it looks like, and how it's treated. So let's get right to it.

I had a client, Annie, who I loved working with. I met her when she was in her 40s as a busy working mom who hadn't lost her baby weight in about five years. She gave 100% in life to her career and family and she was so in love with her kids and just being a mom. It was awesome. We worked together early on. It was clear that she did everything for her kids, but often neglected to take care of herself.

For example, she'd cut a whole pineapple up for the kids to snack on, but forget to bring some to work for herself and wind up at the vending machine or she didn't need any of it because she didn't want to take any from her kids. I remember she'd make her kids amazing lunches with folded napkins and everything and then forget to make one for herself and then be stuck eating fast food or skipping lunch entirely. We did some great work, and since her foundation was already there with her kids, we just had to make a few tweaks and adjustments to her behaviors and diet and she was a success story.

So I was surprised to hear from Annie 15 years later when she told me she gained back all of the weight she'd lost after having been in maintenance for so long. The story turned out to reveal that Annie ignored a sore throat and neck tenderness for a few months or more. She was feeling tired and lousy and her weight was just coming on slowly. It's not like it happened overnight. When she finally got herself to the doctor, she was diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease.

I remember years before teasing Annie when was she ever going to treat herself as well as her kids. I mean, if one of her kids had a sore throat, raspy voice and sore neck, she'd have canceled everything in the world, scheduled a doctor appointment and gotten there immediately. This is a good reminder that we need to make ourselves as important as everyone and everything else in our lives. Annie lost months of her life delaying an important diagnosis because she thought she'd just get better on her own. It wasn't such a big deal.

So what the heck is Hashimoto's disease besides something that is just really fun to say? While Hashimoto's disease and hypothyroid are both connected to low thyroid hormones. In

hypothyroid we're talking about a condition. The thyroid gland doesn't put out enough thyroid hormone. But Hashimoto's is an actual autoimmune disease where the body attacks the thyroid almost like it is a virus or infection. This causes the thyroid function to slow and hormone production to decrease. So, over time, many people with Hashimoto's do become hypothyroid.

Hashimoto's disease is going to have similar effects as hypothyroid. Some things to look out for include changes in metabolism, alterations in the central nervous system, body temperature changes and cold tolerance, muscle strength declining and sometimes joint pain and weight gain, menstrual changes, elevated blood cholesterol. Over time, if undiagnosed, people may develop a goiter, loss of energy, weight gain, constipation and depression. If Hashimoto's is caught early, there may be an elevated TPO, thyroid peroxidase lab. These are the antibodies that can be detected in blood tests.

TPO is an enzyme that plays a role in the production of thyroid hormones. Doctors are going to look for an elevated TPO and low TSH-T3 and T4 to diagnose early Hashimoto's. But oftentimes the goiter is the telltale marker which shows up later. So when Hashimoto's disease is diagnosed, it's treated just like I talked about in another lesson on hypothyroid with Levothyroxine hormone pills. It's dosed based on age, weight, gender, and measured until it's therapeutic. These people go on to live medically stabilized with virtually zero side effects. The Levo mimics the body's natural hormonal homeostasis seamlessly.

Beyond medical management, that will be left to an MD. There are plenty of dietary recommendations that you can also make. There's really some good evidence that focusing on iodine, zinc, and selenium in the diet is helpful in Hashimoto's disease management. With iodine, balance is what's most important. Making sure to keep a stable intake of foods like processed foods, table salt, seafood, dairy, and eggs helps to prevent goiter and supports the medication. When I say processed foods though, there's obviously a wide range of processed foods. The healthy ones of course.

There isn't great research about how much selenium to recommend or if it needs supplementation in Hashimoto's populations, but there is some science that supports that people who take selenium supplements have decreased antibodies in their blood. So I recommend foods like eggs, pork, sardines, tuna, and nuts. Especially I love Brazil nuts here. Because there is typically no harm in adding these foods to a client's diet anyway. There's also some good evidence that zinc supports thyroid health, so you can recommend shellfish, grass-fed beef, organic chicken, lentils, and beans and milk.

It's also been uncovered that gluten and goitrogens can play a role in worsening symptoms. So, in extreme cases, it really may make sense to try someone on a gluten free diet and limit the cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, bok choy.

So let's review the major points from this lesson. Hashimoto's is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the US. It's an autoimmune disease where the body attacks the thyroid leading to slow thyroid function and hormone production. Side effects of Hashimoto's include changes in metabolism, the central nervous system, body temperature, weight, blood cholesterol, menstrual flow, and even muscle strength. A doctor will diagnose Hashimoto's and likely start that person on Levothyroxine hormone pills. On the dietary side of things, you can focus on foods with iodine, zinc, and selenium, while possibly limiting gluten and goitrogens if symptoms don't resolve. So, there you have it on Hashimoto's disease. I'll see you in the next lesson.