

Module 5 Lesson 3

Transcript

Today, we're digging even deeper into understanding the wonderful butterfly shaped gland that sits in the neck, the thyroid. I'm going to give you the ins and the outs of what you need to know about hyperthyroid and hypothyroid so you can feel really confident about your knowledge on these two thyroid conditions and how best to guide your clients. In this lesson, we'll cover what exactly hyperthyroid and hypothyroid conditions are, signs and symptoms of hyperthyroid and hypothyroid, management of hyperthyroid and hypothyroid, and your role in helping clients manage these conditions.

Let's start with hyperthyroid. We know how essential the thyroid is. It literally plays a role in every cell in our bodies and decides how energy is spent. There's not an organ or system that doesn't have some thyroid dependence and it's most essential in heart, bones, muscles, and even in fertility and pregnancy. Just like the butterfly effect in nature, even the slightest uptick shift in this butterfly gland can make for big problems in the body. Once I had a woman come to me in her mid forties, I'm going to call her Lacey. She had lost a significant amount of weight over several months.

She was a healthy weight to begin with and now appeared a little gaunt and sickly. And she thought she was entering menopause because she complained of being hot all the time and that she was unable to sleep well. Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, and feeling restless. Worse yet, she complained that she had symptoms that felt like anxiety. She was racey, restless, nervous, but she really couldn't figure out what was causing it. She wasn't anxious about anything specific and most of Lacey's history was really uneventful as far as health goes. She hadn't had a significant change in her life, work or diet, but she did say her bowels were a little more overactive than usual.

She didn't have new stress and her exercise was the same as usual, but she did complain of not feeling as full of energy as she used to. She just felt lethargic all the time. There weren't changes in her detergents or cleaning products. I always ask about detergent soaps and cleaning products because some of the ingredients can be endocrine disruptors and it's an easy switch to make of course. Lacey was totally scratching her head about what was going on. And since her family history revealed most women in her lineage didn't go through menopause until their mid fifties, so was I. I was one of a few people Lacey was seeing to get to the bottom of her issues, and it was quickly diagnosed by her doctor and lab tests that she was seriously hyperthyroid. She developed Graves' disease, which is the most common form of hyperthyroid. So hyperthyroid is a condition when your body makes too much thyroid hormones.

In Lacey's case with Graves' disease, her body developed an autoimmune response where the immune system attacks the thyroid, sending it into a tailspin. Think about a car leaking gas, causing it to produce too much thyroid hormone. Other forms of hyperthyroid are usually caused by inflammation or nodules that grow on the thyroid themselves. The main symptoms of hyperthyroid are usually nervousness or irritability, fatigue or muscle weakness, and also trouble tolerating heat and trouble sleeping. I could go on much more in depth, but I have it in a handout, so check that out, too.

Let's move on to hypothyroid. Exactly the opposite end of the spectrum, of course from hyper, is hypo thyroid, which is caused by an underactive thyroid where the thyroid does not produce enough thyroid hormones and that causes its own set of problems. Hypothyroid affects almost 5% of the population 12 and up in the US. Since the thyroid isn't working up to speed and not enough thyroid hormones are being produced, systems in the body, the whole body, slow down. And you're going to see some common side effects like exhaustion where people feel just lethargic all the time, weight gain that feels unexplained and out of the ordinary, a puffy or bloated face.

So you'll definitely want to look for that. You may see that in clients. You'll hear complaints of cold intolerance and being cold all the time. There's also some more which are also covered in the handout. If untreated and severe, hypothyroid can even lead to coma and death. So don't the symptoms of hypothyroid sound like they could be so many other problems like an autoimmune disease, depression, menopause, or even IBS? So many symptoms overlap with other issues, which is why it is so important to get the thyroid hormones checked by a doctor. You don't want to write it off as, "Oh, I'm starting menopause," or, "Oh, it's just related to stomach issues." The positive thing about hypothyroid is that it's so manageable with medications such as Synthroid or levothyroxine. They're basically hormones that replace the thyroid hormone, super similar to taking a birth control pill. When you take birth control pills, they chemically trick your body so you won't get pregnant.

Levothyroxine is similar. It chemically tricks your body by adding hormones to mimic a healthy thyroid. Once the doses are adjusted and therapeutic, people with hypothyroid take the hormone pills in the morning 30 minutes before they eat. Once in awhile, hypothyroid clients on meds will tell you they're super sensitive to iodine and they avoid things like kelp and foods in the seaweed family, but mostly these people go back to their normal lives really seamlessly. I'm going to talk about Hashimoto's, a common form of hypothyroid in a later lesson. So we won't touch on that here. So to summarize the key takeaways on these conditions, hyperthyroidism is a condition where the body produces more thyroid hormones than it needs. Hypothyroidism is when the body does not produce enough thyroid hormones. If a client comes to you presenting with the above

symptoms, refer them to an endocrinologist to get thyroid hormones checked. I'll see you in the next lesson.