

WELLNESS review



Thyroid Health

The butterfly-shaped gland

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland, situated in the front part of your neck, which produces hormones needed for normal metabolism. Essentially, you can think of your thyroid hormones as the drums in an orchestra or band; thyroid hormones set the rhythm and the pace for most of our body functions – they regulate our metabolic rate and how fast or slow our organs and tissues function. Disordered thyroid function, therefore, upsets the whole rhythm of the body.

The highs and lows of thyroid function

Dysfunction of the thyroid can cause a number of different symptoms. Thyroid problems can affect weight, energy levels, appetite and mood; but the effects will be different depending on whether the thyroid gland is over functioning or under functioning.

Hyperthyroidism is a state of over-activity of the thyroid gland with excessive production of thyroid hormones and an increased metabolic rate – it's as if the drums that set the rhythm for our bodies have sped up too much and are making everything function too fast. Symptoms of hyperthyroidism can include:

- Feeling hot and intolerant of hot weather
- Weight loss
- Anxiety, restlessness and insomnia
- Excessive sweating
- Increased heart rate
- Fine tremors of the fingers
- High blood pressure

Hypothyroidism, on the other hand, is a state of under-activity of the thyroid gland with an underproduction of thyroid hormone – as if the drums have slowed down and the beat that is running how our body functions is too slow. When your body does not produce enough of the thyroid hormone, the body's metabolism slows so much that you can experience symptoms such as:

- Tiredness and fatigue
- Depression
- Irritability
- Weight gain
- Intolerance to cold weather
- Brittle hair
- Slow heart rate
- A croaky, hoarse voice

Herbs to calm the thyroid

An overactive thyroid can make you feel anxious and restless and can also be a contributing factor to insomnia. A combination of traditional calming herbs may help to manage these symptoms and slow that beating drum that is increasing your metabolism too much. Lemon balm, rehmannia, prunella and *Phyllanthus emblica* are traditional herbs with anti-anxiety actions. They also provide anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant protection, reducing the negative effects of oxidative stress and inflammation on the thyroid.

These herbs are available in one convenient supplement, designed to assist in the management of symptoms associated with excess thyroid activity.

Herbs to balance the thyroid

On the other hand, an under-active thyroid can make you feel tired, cold and depressed. To increase the rhythm of the drum and improve the activity of the thyroid gland, you can use a combination of herbs traditionally used to energise and warm the body. Withania, ginger, goji and rosemary are energising herbs which improve circulation, warm the body and are a great source of antioxidants.

As well as these herbs to stimulate thyroid activity, there are some vital nutrients required for an under-active thyroid, including:

- Iodine: iodine is an essential element for the production of thyroid hormones. Iodine deficiency is common in many areas of the world, leading to depletion of iodine stores and reduced production of thyroid hormones.
- Selenium: this trace element has many important roles in the body, including crucial roles as a cofactor in enzymes essential for production of thyroid hormones.
- Zinc: Low zinc levels are associated with poor thyroid hormone production and reduced basal metabolic rate.

This blend of herbs and nutrients is available in one simple tablet to support healthy thyroid function and assist with the symptoms of hypothyroidism.

By combining the wisdom of nutrition and herbal medicine we can assist in the management of thyroid conditions, helping you feel your best. So if you feel that the orchestra of your body has lost its rhythm, or is functioning too fast or too slow, please come and see us today.

