

Are you self-treating your thyroid problem?

More and more people with thyroid and adrenal problems are taking their treatment into their own hands. They realize that if they don't self-treat, they don't stand much of a chance of recovering their health. The medical establishment has failed them time and again, doctor after doctor. The typical management of TSH levels, the "standard of care", leaves many people undiagnosed or undertreated.

Even when someone is diagnosed and prescribed thyroid hormone medication, the dosage is dictated by their TSH levels. *Why are such important decisions so often made on this one parameter with little or no regard to the clinical symptoms that brought the patient into the doctor's office in the first place?*

One caution if you're self-treating: Be sure to understand the potential impact of any kind of thyroid hormone supplementation on treatment for other health problems that you may experience. One common example is diabetes. Diabetics, both Type 1 and Type 2, need to keep close watch on their blood sugar levels as they adjust their thyroid hormone supplement dosages. As your metabolism improves you will burn your nutrients faster and will need to adjust your calorie intake and blood sugar management regimen.

The three most common problems I find when consulting with clients who are self-treating:

1. Staying too long on a starting dosage of thyroid hormone supplementation

- Some people are uncertain or timid because their other doctors have frightened them about the alleged dangers of thyroid hormone. With proper use, thyroid hormone is safer than aspirin. There are signs and symptoms of excessive dosing to watch for but no actual side effects. Most people need some guidance in what *proper use* means to their individual situation.
- Too low a dosage of thyroid hormone supplementation can be as problematic as none at all for some people. If the hypothalamus or anterior pituitary gland is extra sensitive to a lower level of thyroid hormones the TSH will be suppressed at a lower dosage. Naturally, this slows the production of thyroid hormones in the thyroid gland. When the low dose is not adequate to satisfy tissue demands people may feel worse than they did before using the thyroid medication.
- The starting dosage is rarely the optimal dosage and some people just give up when they don't quickly feel the significant improvements that they're expecting.

2. Neglecting to monitor their responses to treatment in a systematic manner

- Most doctors don't ask people to track changes in their symptoms. With metabolic rehab we're watching changes in symptoms rather than juggling blood test results for TSH and thyroid hormones. Tracking responses to changes in treatment tells us the next steps to take. Since metabolic rehabilitation is a process it can take a few months to find the optimal dosages of thyroid and/or adrenal supports.
- Monitoring is efficient. I often help self-treating people troubleshoot their treatment process and have a lot of questions for them. Their monitoring data will answer many of them.
- Monitoring is economical. People send their monitoring data to me before our consultation appointment and it decreases the time we need to discuss the next steps to take.

2. Missing the signs or symptoms of overstimulation, also called thyrotoxicity

- People sometimes think that the ***only*** symptom of overstimulation is rapid heart rate (tachycardia). Rapid heart rate is defined as a heart rate is over 100 beats per minute *at rest*. In spite of their impaired metabolism, some people have maintained their physical fitness and have good cardiac reserve. Their heart muscles are more efficient and may not develop tachycardia until they are grossly overstimulated.
- Basal body temperature may never come up to normal even when you feel well again. There is a tendency for people to continue increasing their dosage to raise their body temperatures even in the presence of signs and symptoms of overstimulation. This is a situation where more of a good thing isn't better
- Some people simply lack information about signs and symptoms of overstimulation. Be sure to use my "Are you overstimulated?" form found on the Evaluation Forms page of my website. Here's the link to the page:
<http://www.drginahoneyman.com/forms/RevisedAreYouOverstimAugust08..pdf>

***Be safe and ask for help when you have questions
or aren't progressing as you hope.***