

Thyroid Disease in Pregnancy

What is it?

Your thyroid gland is located in your neck, near the base of your throat. It makes hormones that keep your body working at the right 'energy level'. These hormones help control things like your heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature and weight.

Sometimes during pregnancy, the thyroid gland stops working properly. It can produce too much or too little hormone. This is called thyroid dysfunction or thyroid disease. It can cause a range of problems for you and your baby. Some women have thyroid problems before falling pregnant. Some thyroid problems are caused by your pregnancy and may return to normal after your baby is born.

What will my GP do now?

If you have too much thyroid hormone your GP may:

- Refer you to a specialist (endocrinologist), who may start you on medication, if necessary
- Suggest you stop taking iodine supplements
- Do further blood tests to find out the cause of your thyroid problem

If you have too little thyroid hormone your GP may:

- Start you on medication
- Adjust your medication (if you had a thyroid problem before falling pregnant)

You still need to be reviewed by the antenatal clinic. Depending on how severe your thyroid disease is, you may be able to continue antenatal shared care.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will want to see you regularly to monitor your thyroid function. You will have blood tests throughout your pregnancy.

Your doctor may make adjustments to your medications or refer you to a specialist. After you deliver your baby, your GP will keep checking your thyroid function. For many women, it returns to normal and they can stop treatment.

What can I do?

Tell your doctor if you've had problems with your thyroid function in the past. Take your medication or supplements as your doctor has told you.

Ask your doctor before starting any dietary supplements (vitamins). They may not be appropriate for you.

What supports are available?

Public

Your GP may refer you to a specialist (endocrinologist) in the South Western Sydney Area Health District:

- Gestational Thyroid and Endocrine Disorders Clinic: **9616 8860**
- Bankstown Antenatal Clinic: **9722 8333**
- Fairfield Hospital Antenatal Clinic: **9616 8506**
- Bowral and District Hospital Antenatal Clinic: **4861 0224**
- Liverpool Hospital Antenatal Clinic: **8738 4191**
- Camden Hospital Antenatal Clinic: **4654 6222**
- Campbelltown Hospital Antenatal Clinic: **4634 4963**

Private

You can ask your GP for a referral to a private endocrinologist.

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What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Do I need to take any medication?
- Can I breastfeed while taking my medication?
- What are the side effects of the medication?
- Will the disease affect my baby?
- Do I need to stop taking my pregnancy supplement?
- What symptoms should I look out for?



Where can I learn more?

To read more about having thyroid disease in pregnancy, visit the Patient.info website:

- **Overactive Thyroid Gland:** patient.info
- **Underactive Thyroid Gland:** patient.info

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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