



Creating Solutions, Changing Lives!

Healthy Lifestyles!

Easter Seals New Jersey
Healthy Lifestyles

Important Dates to Remember:

- **January**
Thyroid Awareness Month
- **February**
Healthy Heart Month
- **Sat 5/11**
Walk With Me 2013
- **Sat 5/25**
World Thyroid Day



Register TODAY at
walkwithme.org/nj!

Or for more info, contact Michelle Kasper,
Special Events Manager 732/955-8368

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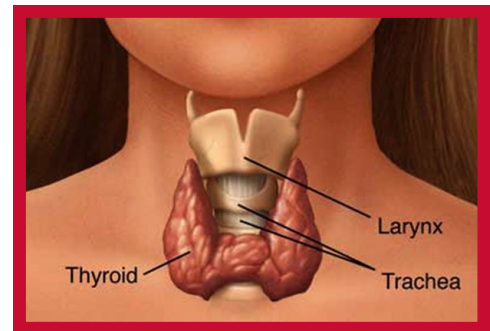
JANUARY IS THYROID AWARENESS MONTH

What is the Thyroid Gland?

The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland located in the neck. It produces the thyroid hormone that helps the body use energy, stay warm and keep the brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working as they should.

If the thyroid gland is underactive or overactive, it can have a slew of negative effects. Some classic features of poor thyroid function include tiredness, overweight and general sluggishness. In addition, the person may feel the cold, experience constipation, have dry skin, sparse hair and a rather hoarse voice.

People living with disabilities are often at a higher risk for thyroid disease than others.



3 WAYS TO HELP PREVENT THYROID DISORDER

- Talk to your doctor about your risk factors and thyroid testing
- Stop Smoking! Cigarette smoke has various toxins that are especially dangerous to the thyroid
- A healthy diet, exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep and stress reduction can all minimize the chance of developing thyroid disease

Find more tips and valuable information on thyroid health at www.thyroid.org.

THYROID DISORDER & DOWN SYNDROME

Thyroid disorder is more frequent at all ages among people with Down Syndrome than others.

It is very important that caregivers be aware of the possibility of thyroid underactivity. You may be the first to notice early changes.

If a person with Down starts to slow down physically and intellectually and put on a lot of weight, consult a doctor. Explain these changes, convey that you are worried about the possibility of thyroid disorder, and ask if a blood test should be done!

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the American Thyroid Association, an estimated **27 million Americans** have **overactive or underactive thyroid glands**, but **more than half remain undiagnosed**. **Women** are also **more likely** than men to **develop thyroid disease**.

Additionally, **people with diabetes and/or their siblings** are **15 to 20% more likely** to **develop thyroid disease**.

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Helping children, adults, and families with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in their communities since 1948!

People living with disabilities are often at a higher risk for thyroid disease than others.

In an effort to address the health needs of individuals with disabilities, Easter Seals New Jersey is participating in a five year study - The Longitudinal Health and Intellectual Disability Study from University Illinois at Chicago, Department of Disability and Human Development College of Applied Health Services.

The first and second year (2011 and 2012) annual reports found that the top five chronic health conditions for people with disabilities included thyroid disorder.

Additionally, people who take certain medications may develop thyroid problems. Some medicines interfere with thyroid hormone production and lead to underactive thyroid.

Some changes in the thyroid and weight are also related to aging:

- The thyroid gland decreases in size with increasing age
- The BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) decreases with age. It is usually a result of decreased activity. This leads to a change in body composition - from predominantly muscular to predominantly fatty. If you have an underactive thyroid AND you are an older adult, your chances of gaining weight are increased.



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Some Problems of Thyroid Function

Hypothyroidism: A thyroid that is not active enough and does not make enough thyroid hormones.

Hypothyroidism can make you:

- * Gain weight
- * Feel fatigued
- * Have difficulty dealing with cold temperatures

Hyperthyroidism: A thyroid that is too active makes more thyroid hormones than your body needs.

Hyperthyroidism can make you:

- * Lose weight
- * Speed up your heart rate
- * Make you very sensitive to heat

These are just a few signs of thyroid disorders.

Untreated hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism can lead to a number of health problems

Your doctor can diagnose **hyperthyroidism** and **hypothyroidism** by testing the levels of **thyroid** hormones in your **blood**. Treatment involves trying to reset your body's metabolism.

Find out the results of the study once published and see how Easter Seals New Jersey is taking steps to address chronic health issues for people with disabilities at eastersealsnj.org/health

May 25th is World Thyroid Day!

World Thyroid Day is being celebrated internationally on May 25th. We encourage you to join the celebration by helping to spread awareness of thyroid diseases and prevention!

Learn more by visiting The American Thyroid Association at www.thyroid.org.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Focus on Heart Health ♥



Walk/Run/Volunteer for children & adults with disabilities

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Or for more info, contact Michelle Kasper, Special Events Manager
 732/955-8368 | mikasper@nj.easterseals.com