



NEW JERSEY

Easter Seals New Jersey  
**Healthy Lifestyles**  
**MARCH-APRIL**  
 Thyroid Care  
 General Health



**Dates to Remember:**

- **Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**Special Needs Parents  
 & Caregiver Retreat at  
 Camp Merry Heart**

To learn more  
 about the above, visit  
[eastersealsnj.org](http://eastersealsnj.org)

Easter Seals New Jersey  
 25 Kennedy Blvd, Suite 600  
 East Brunswick, NJ 08816  
 732/257-6662  
[eastersealsnj.org](http://eastersealsnj.org)



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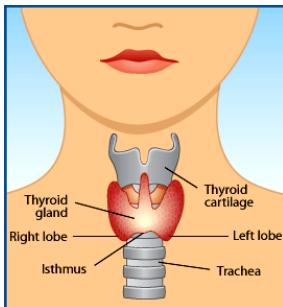
Creating Solutions, Changing Lives!

## Healthy Lifestyles!

### Make Thyroid Screenings Part of Your Routine Health Care

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

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.



#### What is the Thyroid Gland?

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the front of the neck below the larynx, or voice box.

The thyroid gland makes thyroid hormones which circulate in the bloodstream and affect tissues and cells in the body. Thyroid hormones affect metabolism (the chemical processes that occur within a living organism in order to maintain life), brain development, breathing, heart and nervous system functions, body temperature, muscle strength, skin dryness, menstrual cycles, weight, cholesterol levels, and more.

If the thyroid gland is underactive or overactive, it can have a host of negative effects. Some features of poor thyroid function are fatigue and being over-weight. In addition, a person may feel cold, experience constipation, have dry skin, sparse hair and a hoarse voice.

#### Why are thyroid function tests performed?

Thyroid function tests are used to evaluate the thyroid's functioning and to diagnose and help determine the cause of thyroid diseases.

Sometimes the body produces too much or too little thyroid hormone.

**Too much thyroid hormone** in the bloodstream causes **hyperthyroidism**,

which results in increased metabolic rate, weight loss, sweating, rapid heart rate, and high blood pressure, among other symptoms.

**Too little thyroid hormone** causes **hypothyroidism**, which slows down bodily functions and leads to fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, and related symptoms.

Talk to your doctor about your risk factors and testing to assess thyroid function by measuring hormone levels and abnormalities in the thyroid gland.

*"An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure"*

*-Benjamin Franklin*

### 3 WAYS TO HELP PREVENT THYROID DISORDER

- Stop Smoking! Cigarette smoke has various toxins that are especially dangerous to the thyroid
- Eat a healthy diet and get 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](http://www.thyroid.org).



Visit  
<http://goo.gl/DIfE7T>  
 to watch a video  
 about the Be Well! &  
 Thrive Program!



## Health & Well-Being in the Bank!

Thinking about our “golden years” often leads to thinking about financial security. Many of us take steps necessary to

ensure that financial security as we age by establishing savings accounts and meeting with advisors to assist us in making the right decisions for our financial future.

But, how often do we consider the quality of our *health and well-being* in our golden years? How many of us create a “health and well-being savings plan”? How many of us take steps to ensure we will transition into our golden years with a sense of vibrancy and youthfulness to simply enjoy all that life has to offer as we age?

### Here are some simple ways to begin building your “Health & Well-Being Savings Plan”:

- ♥ **A body in motion stays in motion.** Make your first deposit into your “savings” account. Just move. Our bodies are designed to move, so start moving your body today and keep it moving. Choose physical activities you enjoy—any physical activity will be beneficial. Walking is the easiest way to start. Consider joining a community fitness class or gym. Find a personal trainer that will help inspire and motivate you. Perhaps start enjoying local parks or trails with biking or hiking. Whatever you enjoy, go for it! Just keep moving! If it’s been a while since you have enjoyed physical activity, be sure to check with your physician before beginning any physical exercise regimen.
- ♥ **What you put in is what you put out.** Our bodies crave nutrient dense food. Choose to build your “savings” by giving your body what it needs. Nutrient dense foods such as vegeta-



There’s an old saying: *with age comes wisdom*. But

we can tap into that wisdom today! Let’s be a little wiser and choose today to take the steps necessary to build a vibrant life with our own health and well-being in the bank.

-By James Richardson, Certified Holistic Health Counselor

bles, fruits and whole grains are most beneficial. Choose lean animal proteins and plant-based proteins such as beans, nut and seeds. Avoid processed and fast foods which tend to be laden with fat, salt, and sugar and provide no benefit to longevity and health.

♥ **The fountain of youth.** Overfill your account with the elixir of life: **water**. Consider replacing your daily coffee, tea, or carbonated beverages with clean fresh water. Water is a life-giving nutrient that has positive effects throughout our body, from brain and organ function to the repair of our cells. Water is an underused nutrient that will enhance our daily lives. Want to have fresh glowing skin with fewer wrinkles? Drink water.

♥ **Just let go.** To reduce the risk of pulling from your “savings account” too early, practice stress management techniques. Studies have shown that stress can be managed successfully with simple techniques. Start by spending a few minutes each day by sitting still and following your breath to naturally lower your blood pressure and clam the nervous system. Even five minutes has a positive impact. Exercise daily to reduce adrenal fatigue and lower cortisol levels caused by stress. Find a quiet place with nature. Sit by a body of water, walk through the woods or spend an evening star gazing. Nature is nature’s way of help us reduce our stress levels.



## Take Steps to Live a Nutrition Filled, Fitter Lifestyle

According to the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), adults with disabilities have an increased risk for heart diseases related illnesses.


High blood pressure, high LDL (bad) cholesterol, and smoking are the primary risk factors for heart disease.

Lifestyle choices also play a key role in heart disease, such as being overweight, poor diet, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol use, and smoking.

# Be Well! & Thrive™

Did you know?

Easter Seals New Jersey’s Be Well! & Thrive™ Health and Wellness Program’s Inclusive Exercise Instructor Training Program is the first inclusive exercise program to be accredited by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE).



The program is being introduced at the New Jersey Commission on Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities’ 32nd Annual Conference on April 30th in Monroe Township, NJ.

The Easter Seals New Jersey Program participants who guided the creation the exercise program will be demonstrating their class in person! To learn more about the conference, visit <http://njcrid.org/>

Want to find out how you, your loved one, or your group can get involved?

See how Easter Seals New Jersey is taking steps to address chronic health issues for people with disabilities at [eastersealsnj.org/health](http://eastersealsnj.org/health).

<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Laura O’Reilly, R.N., AVP Health and Wellness Easter Seals New Jersey; Member of Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association
<b>Sources:</b>	Dept. of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health; <a href="http://www.endocrine.niddk.nih.gov/pubs/thyroidtests/index.aspx#whatis">http://www.endocrine.niddk.nih.gov/pubs/thyroidtests/index.aspx#whatis</a> ; <a href="http://www.thyroid.org">www.thyroid.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2009/Sept302009">http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2009/Sept302009</a> ; National Council on Disability; New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association

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