



Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

INFORMATION SHEET



THYROID DISEASE IN CHILDREN

Thyroid disease in children is rare but does still occur in a small number of children each year. Every baby is tested for Thyroid disease as a routine procedure at around five days old. The test use is a simple heel prick test where a sample of blood is taken and tested.

Congenital Myxoedema

This means thyroid under activity that you were born with. There are several causes but the most common is the absence of or an abnormal development of the Thyroid gland. Rarer causes include failures in the chemical sequence in which Thyroid hormones are made.

Congenital Hyperthyroidism

Thyroid over activity in a new baby is very rare. It occurs when the baby's mother has developed Graves disease during pregnancy or has been treated for Graves disease and cured a long time before. The cause of your baby's hyperthyroidism is the thyroid stimulating anti-bodies that remain in your blood and are passed to your baby during pregnancy. If you are treated from Graves during the pregnancy it is very unlikely that your baby will be hyper thyroid because the carbimazole will cross the placenta and suppress your baby's thyroid gland. In theory, your baby could then be born with Cngenital Myxoedema, however, research shows it is very rare for this to happen as your baby's thyroid gland started working when it was an 8 week old foetus.

Treatments

Hyperthyroidism in babies is treated with small doses of anti-thyroid drugs, much the same way that it is administered to adults. This treatment usually needs to be done on a short term basis because the thyroid stimulating anti-bodies that passed from mother to baby during pregnancy only persist for a short time, after which the baby's thyroid returns to its normal function.

Hypothyroidism in babies is treated very much the same way as adults are with Thyroxine. Regular blood tests need to be taken to make sure that as the baby grows into childhood the right levels of thyroxine is being given. Special care needs to be taken when Puberty is reached as this is a very important time in the development of the child. Research has shown that children whose thyroid levels are low don't do as well at school, are poor at sport, have poor concentration levels and poor memory. This is one reason why children with thyroid problems need monitoring very carefully to ensure they get the best chance in life.

Research done on Thyroid disease shows that some patients who have had an episode of thyroid dysfunction may go on to have reoccurring episodes at various stages of their life. C.A.T.S. feel that it is very important for any such patients to be monitored on a regular basis as Thyroid symptoms are not always obvious and can go untreated in many cases. The sooner your Thyroid problem is treated, the less chance there is of other health conditions developing.

C.A.T.S RECOMMENDS YOU ALWAYS SEEK YOUR DOCTORS ADVICE

Disclaimer

The purpose of this information leaflet is to help those suffering with thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that the information given is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by CATS and it is recommended and essential, that if in any doubt about your condition, that you should always contact your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.