



Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

INFORMATION SHEET



THYROID – THE LINK WITH BOWEL DISORDERS

The link between bowel disorders and autoimmune thyroid diseases is now becoming more widely recognised. A thyroid imbalance can affect any organ in the body including the intestines:

BOWEL PROBLEMS:

1. Coeliac Disease – is a result of sensitivity to gluten found in wheat, barley, oats and rye grains. It can cause diarrhoea and malabsorption – leading to malnutrition. The symptoms resolve when the patient eats a gluten-free diet.
2. Crohn's Disease – is an autoimmune inflammation of the small bowel causing abdominal pain, diarrhoea, bloody diarrhoea and fever.
3. IBS – Irritable Bowel Syndrome – this can range from abdominal pain, especially in the left groin, diarrhoea and alternative constipation. Causes are fairly unknown, although a change of diet and eliminating stress usually alleviates this condition. There are a large number of thyroid patients with this condition, and it is wise for the G.P. to rule out the two former conditions mentioned. Thyroid imbalances which can lead to stress can worsen this condition.

Any abdominal pain, change in bowel habits and type of stool, must be immediately reported to your Doctor.

There are varying treatments for all of these conditions.

IMPORTANT: It must be noted also that frequent bowel movements are one of the symptoms of hyperthyroidism, and when the patient is treated for this condition, the symptoms could be alleviated or even eliminated. Always check your thyroid balance regularly, remembering to go for your blood tests – this applies to all types of thyroid condition.

The autoimmune type of bowel conditions are usually linked with Graves' Disease, but can occur in any thyroid condition.

REMEMBER FOR ALL BOWEL SYMPTOMS – CONSULT YOUR G.P.

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.