



Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

INFORMATION SHEET



THYROID DISEASE AND WEIGHT PROBLEMS

The 'overweight' problem, particularly not being able to shed excess weight very easily is one of the most stressful symptoms encountered by the under active thyroid patient. Many low thyroid patients do not eat enough. When the body is starved of nutrition it compensates by shutting down. This has a knock on effect on the metabolism which slows down to conserve energy. This effect causes an increase in weight as the food that has been eaten is not used, but instead stored in the body as fat tissue.

Research has shown that in order to lose excess weight Thyroid patients need to eat regularly. So 5 small snack meals throughout the day are much better than going without food for long periods of time, and then binge eating to restore your energy levels. Small amounts of fruit and vegetables such as bananas, apples, oranges and carrots make ideal snacks. A good healthy diet rich in complex carbohydrates such as rice, pasta and brown bread is essential to promote a healthy metabolism. Protein foods need to be added to your diet in order to keep the body's metabolism working to the best advantage. Thyroid patients benefit from regular meals as this helps to keep our sugar levels balanced. Try to limit high fat and high sugar foods as these foods give us an instant boost in energy but this effect does not last very long and this results in a fall of our sugar levels, dips in our energy levels and a subsequent craving for more sugar. To break this vicious sweet circle you can have a low fat yoghurt and a banana as a snack, this will fill you up and gives you longer lasting energy than the high fat foods would do.

Many thyroid patients suffer from fluid retention, giving a bloated look and an increase in weight (not fat just excess fluid). If you drink up to 8 glasses of water during the day, this will help to reduce the excess fluid. Another tip is to drink a small glass of water before a meal as this helps the body to digest your meal much better and also helps to reduce fluid retention. Tea, coffee and fizzy drinks are best limited as these drinks can increase your fluid retention. If you are concerned about your weight then go and speak with your G.P. Some surgeries run weight loss programs as part of promoting a healthy lifestyle. It is not impossible for Thyroid patients to lose weight but it does need a great deal of willpower from the patients themselves and support from family, friends, and the medical profession.

Many organisations including Weight Watchers can offer advice and support to assist you in a safe weight loss programme. Be sure to explain to them your medical history.

GOOD LUCK!

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.