



C.A.T.S.

Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

2017 BUMPER CHRISTMAS EDITION

Long may C.A.T.S. continue to give hope to
Thyroid patients everywhere.

HOPE

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to our Christmas 2017 Bumper Edition. We are sending out a warm welcome to our new members who joined us recently.

Our Thyroid Friends group is a friendly support group that has been set up to help patients or relatives and friends of patients who have been, affected by Thyroid problems. Our founder the late June Kasaven was a retired nurse, who had an amazing knowledge of Thyroid issues. While June was in charge of C.A.T.S. one of her proudest moments was to receive a phone call from the BMA (British Medical Association) asking for advice. It is this knowledge that has allowed C.A.T.S. to become the successful group that we are now recognized as. Thyroid problems can be complex, so if you want any queries answered please don't hesitate to ring me at the office. If I am not available to take your call, and you don't wish to leave a message on the answer machine, you can also call Gill 01229 827438. Both Gill and myself are fully trained Thyroid advisors.

This is the last of our 2017 newsletters and I can't believe how fast the year has gone. During the last few weeks the office has been extremely busy with lots of phone calls, e-mails and letters to answer. As a result of this we have lots of subjects to talk about in this newsletter. Can I just give everyone a reminder that if your personal details change, can you please inform the C.A.T.S. office, all information given to us is treated as confidential, however we do need this information if we need to contact you for any reason. If you can do this, I will be grateful



Thyroid Friends / Gold stars

Many thanks to everyone who continues to support us by continuing to renew their membership of Thyroid Friends, sending in extra donations towards our funds, and helping behind the scenes to keep C.A.T.S. running as a support group. In the last few years many support groups have sadly closed down, please don't let that happen to C.A.T.S. I often get phone calls from patients to say how helpful the advice we have given has been, please spread the word about our group, so we can help even more patients. Our research shows that Thyroid dysfunction is on the increase. As many as 4 out of 10 patients in this area may have Thyroid problems. Many of these patients will go undiagnosed for months or even years. Some patients are even sadly misdiagnosed and put on antidepressants, which does not sort out the problem. Please let us all work together to raise the awareness of this very important health issue.

If your newsletter has a gold star on this indicates your membership is due for renewal, please send your cheque and the renewal form enclosed with your newsletter to the office. Members who receive their newsletters by e-mail will receive a separate renewal form in the post. Don't forget membership costs just £6-00 per year, this is one of our main sources of funds, so if you can support us we will be very grateful

Phone and Internet problems.

Between June and September we experienced problems with our internet and phone systems. This may have resulted in some members not receiving their newsletters during this time. It was only the e-mail members newsletters that were affected. I am fairly confident that I have managed to contact everyone that may have not received their newsletters. However, if you are an e-mail member and did not get the last two newsletters can you please get in touch.

BT/ Openreach have now fixed the problem so we are hoping everyone will get this newsletter on time.

Facebook Page/Website

Don't forget to take a look at our website www.cumbriancats.co.uk and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/Cumbria-Advisory-Thyroid-Service-C.A.T.S./1387475768249218 Please also like and share these links to spread the word about Thyroid Disease

Teva Levothyroxine

Most patients who are taking T4 (Levothyroxine) may have noticed a different brand in your pharmacy. The Teva brand became available earlier this year. All the different brands of Levothyroxine contain the basic ingredient Thyroxine plus fillers and additives. Over the last few weeks I have received some phone calls from some of our members who are saying they are not feeling as well since they have been taking the Teva brand of Levothyroxine. I have looked into this and discovered that the Teva brand contains Acacia, this is used as a preservative. Patients who have allergies or have inflammatory health conditions may be sensitive to Acacia, and may not feel as well when taking the Teva brand. If this is happening to you, you can get around the problem by using a different brand. Boots, Asda and many other pharmacies do not use the Teva brand so it is just a case of shopping around until you find a pharmacy that uses a different brand. C.A.T.S always advise that it is better to stick to one brand of T4, that way you can be sure you are getting the same ingredients in each batch



Fluoride in your water

There has been a lot in the media recently about fluoride being added to our water supply. The idea behind this is to prevent tooth decay. However, did you know that fluoride can inhibit your Thyroid hormones, and stop your T4 /T3 pills from working properly. Fluoride is also added to toothpaste and surprisingly can be absorbed into your body when you brush your teeth. You can get around this by only buying fluoride free toothpaste. If you live in an area where fluoride has been added to the water supply, C.A.T.S. suggest that you look at the option of bottled water if you regularly drink water.

Postage Costs

One of our biggest expenses is postage, if you would like to help us save a little money, why not sign up to have your newsletter by e-mail. You can revert back to postal newsletters anytime you wish. It is free to sign up just send your e-mail address to the C.A.T.S. office. If you don't like this idea, don't worry, we are still happy to send your newsletter by post.

T3 Petition

It is now almost 12 months since we launched our petition to have T3 (Liothyronine) reinstated as a prescription drug, available on the NHS as a free prescription. <https://www.change.org/p/the-secretary-of-state-for-health-jeremy-hunt-reinstate-T3-liothyronine-as-a-prescription-drug-available-on-the-nhs> We have had a tremendous response to this petition, with over 2,300 lovely people signing on-line in support of our mission. Michael Cassells who works with our MP John Woodcock, has told me, John is planning to raise the T3 issue in Parliament very soon. I am waiting for confirmation of when this will be. NHS England recently launched a consultation to give patients the opportunity to say why T3, should not be withdrawn. However, before this consultation had been completed many CCG's had already decided that they would no longer prescribe T3. Cumbria CCG's are among this group that have made this decision. However, our CCG are saying that, if patients who have a clinical need for T3 they can ask for a referral to see the endocrinology team, if there is evidence to show these patients need T3, they will be allowed to have it on prescription. C.A.T.S. feel the problem about this arrangement is that patients are having to wait a very long time before the referral takes place. I know 1 lady who has waited more than 8 months, during this time your health will deteriorate, which is not fair from a patient's point of view, (all they want is too feel well again)

Tim Farron MP is also actively fighting our cause. Tim has been in contact with our CCG, NHS England, The Department of Health and several other organisations. Adding to this activity there is also a national petition, that is being run by the ITT Campaign group. This petition is available on-line, the link is <https://www.change.org/p/itt-campaign-group-improve-thyroid-treatment-for-millions-of-people-stop-the-withdrawal-of-t3>. This group have managed to get over 27,000 signatures in just over in 4 months which is fantastic. However, they do need more supporters in order to get the petition to parliament. Can you help? If you have not signed the ITT petition please consider doing so. The ITT campaign is fighting for better treatment for Thyroid patients. This is an important campaign as in this country Thyroid conditions are often looked on as "Old Ladies problems" which is very sad as medical knowledge has advanced so much in recent years. Please help get this petition to parliament



Mental Health

It is estimated that 1 in 4 people will suffer from mental health issues at some stage in their life. Many patients will have more than one episode and sadly some patients will suffer for many years. Many of these patients will be Thyroid patients, as there is a strong link between Thyroid dysfunction and mental health issues. The government are spending huge amounts of money to help patients who are diagnosed with mental health issues. Anti-depressant medication used to be the standard treatments. However, the medical professionals are now looking at other forms of treatments. Counselling, Hypnotherapy, Cognitive Behavioural therapy, Talking Therapies, and Mindfulness are some of the treatments now used, alongside traditional medications. For milder forms of depression, the herbal remedy St John's Wort has been successful for some patients. However, this remedy can interact if taken with some medications so please check with your doctor first. Please also remember that St John's Wort must not be taken with anti-depressants. Homeopathy can also help with some mental health issues however, you need to seek advice from a registered Homeopath. Many doctors say that there is no proof that Homeopathy works. I have personally used homeopathy for several health conditions and have found an improvement in those health conditions. However, our bodies are all different and what works for one person will not work for another. If you are struggling with depression and anxiety, it is important to have a good diet full of essential vitamins and minerals. If you are a Thyroid patient it is also important to have optimum levels of Vitamin D, Ferritin, Folate and Vitamin B12. These vitamins and minerals are essential for your Thyroid to work properly. Many Underactive patients do not have good digestive systems, even when your diet is good, many Thyroid patients are found to have low levels of these essential nutrients. If your levels are low your body can not convert your T4 into T3. Research has linked low levels of T3 to patients developing depression. Exercise has also been shown to improve depression and anxiety, so if you are experiencing these conditions, why not take up walking. Walking is one of the best and easier forms of exercise. You don't need any expensive equipment, and another bonus is it does not cost anything. You don't need to walk far just a walk around the block and getting some fresh air in your lungs will make a big difference. C.A.T.S suggest, if you are struggling with mental health issues, please go and have a chat with your GP.

Blood test normal but not well

Many members phone to say they have been told from their GP that their blood tests are normal, but they still don't feel well. There are many reasons for this. In South Cumbria the test ranges for T4 (Thyroxine) go from 8 to 18, so you may be at the bottom of the range, or near the top but still be told your test is normal. Other areas of the country may have different Thyroid ranges, you can check which range is being used by asking when you get your blood test results. If you do live in the South Cumbria area, C.A.T.S. recommend that you aim to get your T4 levels around 15. T4 is only a storage hormone, and it is the level of T3 that is important. Anywhere around 15 will give your body chance to convert your T4 into optimum levels of T3. For patients who do not live in our area, we advise that you should aim to have your T4 roughly three quarters of the way up the range. Good levels of T4 are needed for the T3 conversion process. T3 is the active hormone that gives us all our energy, controls our metabolism and every other action in our body. So if our T3 levels are low we won't feel well. Another reason for not feeling well is that you may have had a mild virus infection which your body has not recovered from.

Thyroid patients take longer to recover from virus illnesses than patients who do not have Thyroid issues. We have already mentioned in our mental health article how important it is to have optimum levels of Vitamin D, Ferritin, Folate and Vitamin B12, if the levels of these important nutrients are low you will feel unwell, C.A.T.S. recommend that these levels should be roughly three quarters of the way up the range. If your levels are lower than this, please ask your doctor if they can suggest ways to improve your levels. Some doctors may recommend you need to take extra supplements. However, you need to be cautious as some supplements can react against our medications, (this is very important if you take multiple medications) so please ask your doctor first.

If you have other auto-immune health conditions or any other illnesses alongside your Thyroid condition this may also cause you to feel unwell. Diabetes, Pernicious anaemia and Chronic Fatigue syndrome are just some examples of this. Some medications we take for other conditions can cause our T4 not to be utilized by our body, so even if the levels are good you may not be getting the full benefit of your Thyroid hormones. In cases such as this it becomes a fine balancing act, with doctors aiming to get patients as well as possible without causing too much imbalances in other areas of our body

Soya Products and Goitrogen Foods

Many patients who are sensitive to dairy foods often switch to soya foods, but did you know that soya contains compounds that block your Thyroid gland from producing Thyroid hormones. These foods are called goitrogen foods and if used in excess may cause you to develop a goitre (swelling on your Thyroid gland). If your Thyroid gland does not function properly and you need to take Thyroxine, the goitrogen foods will block your Thyroxine from being utilized by your body. Most patients reading this will think it is alright I don't use soya.

However, a member has pointed out that most of the bread that you buy from the supermarkets does contain soya flour. I have not checked yet but I would think that many other products we buy will also contain soya in one form or another. There are also other foods that have a goitrogen action, for instance Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Kale and Turnips all contain goitrogen compounds. There is an idea that if you cook these vegetables first that will destroy the compounds, however as far as I know this theory has not been proved. Eating one or two portions of these vegetables, once or twice a week will do no harm, as the goitrogen action is not as strong as it is in soya foods.

Competition Time

As it is almost Christmas, I thought it would be nice to have a little competition. It is fairly simple and the answer is within this newsletter. All we need you to do is answer a simple question. All correct answers will be put in a hat and one winner will be picked out. The prize is a £ 10-00 gift voucher of the winner's choice. So here we go, good luck everyone!

What is Hashimoto's disease?

Please send your answers to the office, by Wednesday December 20th



Getting ready for winter

As the winter months approach, Thyroid patients need to take extra care. Winter colds and flu germs are much harder to get rid of, than they are during the warmer weather. So, I thought I would share some simple tips to help you get through the winter

******Taking the herb Echinacea along with Vitamin C and the minerals Zinc and Selenium, plus a Garlic supplement can ensure your immune system has a real boost. (please check with your doctor or pharmacist before using these products, just in case there is a reaction with any medication you take) It is always better to make sure

******Drinking plenty of hot drinks will help to keep your body's core temperature in the normal range

******Make sure you get plenty of sleep as our bodies repair themselves when we sleep

******Eat plenty of nourishing foods such as casseroles, soups, and stews, these are easy to prepare and if you make a double portion, you can always freeze some for another day

****** Wearing extra layers of clothes (three or four thin layers are better than one thick one) Our body's heat gets trapped between the layers and helps to keep us warmer

****** If you can't afford to heat your whole house, then always keep one room heated and stay in that room as much as possible (between 18c and 21c is the recommended temperature)

****** Don't forget if it is very cold, wearing gloves, an extra pair of socks and even a hat indoors can all help to stop heat escaping from your body

****** Think positive thoughts, positive thinking people are more healthy

****** Getting up and walking around the room will stop your joints stiffing up

******Last of all don't forget your flu jab, (doctors do not always send reminders out) so put a note in your diary so you don't forget. They are usually available from October.

TSH T4 T3

Members often phone to ask what does TSH / T4/T3 mean, a few days ago I found this on Facebook so I thought I would share it. I think it will raise a smile or two with our men members.

TSH- is the coach that motivates the players

T4 – is the player that takes the ball down the field

T3 – is the player that scores the goal



Overactive Thyroids

Overactive Thyroid is not as common as the Underactive ones. However, we do get quite a lot of calls from patients who have been told they have an overactive thyroid problem. One of the big differences about overactivity in your Thyroid is that in many cases the overactivity will subside over a period of months. The most common symptoms are tiredness, weight loss, feeling hot most of the time, and the feeling that your body is stuck in 5th gear all the time, panic attacks and anxiety are common symptoms along with palpitations or a rapid heartbeat. Some patients also develop eye problems the muscles behind the eye swell causing the eye to be pushed forward. This results in double vision which can be quite distressing for the patient. Patients who do have eye problems should be referred to the eye clinic at your hospital for expert advice

Treatments are usually aimed at reducing the activity of the Thyroid gland. Anti-Thyroid medication, Steroid's and Beta-Blockers are often used but if these are not effective Radio-active Iodine treatment may be used. If the Thyroid still has not returned to normal, the Iodine treatment may be used for a second time. Most patients return to normal within 18 months but if this does not happen surgery will be considered. Modern methods of surgery mean that patients are usually only left with a very small scar. It is very frightening to face any surgery but most patients I have spoken to have recovered from the surgery very quickly. A most important point to note is patients who have had an Overactive Thyroid often have several episodes of this before the Thyroid gland finally stops working and becomes Underactive. When this happens, patients will need to take T4(Levothyroxine)

Diet and your Thyroid

If you ask a Thyroid patient what they would like most, many patients will say “if only I could lose some weight” however, it is not that simple. Thyroid patients have a very slow metabolism which means we do not burn up the calories we eat very quickly. If our diet is full of starchy carbohydrate foods these will stay in our bodies longer. However, this starch turns to sugar, and many Thyroid patients have also got poor sugar metabolism. This sugar then gets trapped in our fat cell and the result is our weight increases. Thyroid patients can lose weight but it does take a great deal of willpower. I have found if patients fill up on vegetables and only eat small portions of the starchy carbohydrates this will help. You also need some protein small portions of fish, chicken, or eggs are a good choice but you can also use the vegetable proteins such as Quorn, Lentils and beans are also a good source of protein. We also need some of the good fats in our diet so look for foods that are rich in the Omega 3,6, and 9 oils. It is also important to drink plenty water each day. Some members find it easier to lose weight if they are part of a group such as Weightwatchers or Slimming World, if you do join one of these groups don’t forget to say you have a Thyroid problem.



Hashimoto’s Thyroid Disease

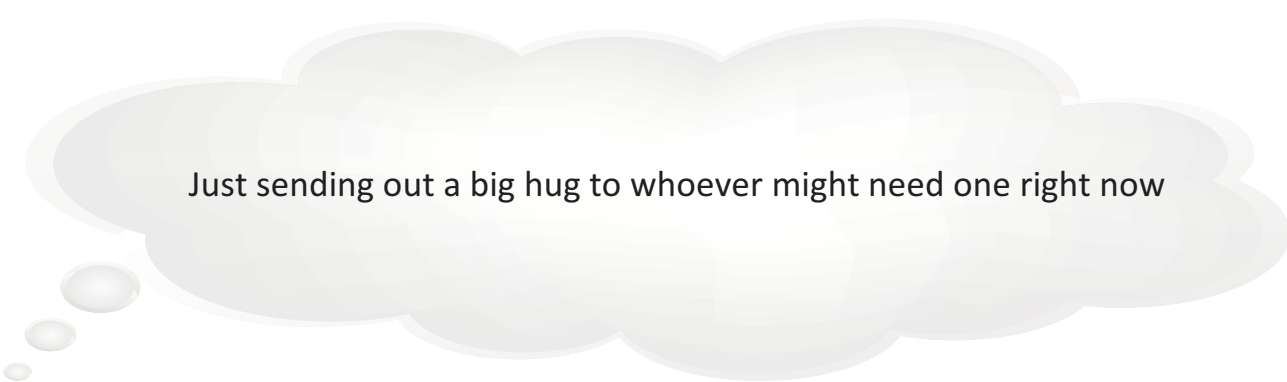
Hashimoto’s is simply an underactive Thyroid, but in most patients, it has been caused by anti-body activity slowly destroying the Thyroid gland. This destruction is a slow process and can take many years to reach the stage when patients realise something is wrong. During this time patients will go through episodes of underactivity followed by brief spells of overactivity. Each episode will cause damage to your Thyroid. Eventually your poor Thyroid just says, “I have had enough of this” and stops working. At first the gland will still produce tiny amounts, so when the patients are diagnosed they will start off on a low dose of T4. However, these patients usually end up on higher doses as the Thyroid gland stops working altogether. Once this happens your Thyroid will probably start to shrink and become much smaller. This process also happens to your ovaries when ladies have gone through the menopause. The ovaries just shrink and in some cases, disappear altogether.



Thank you

As this is the last newsletter for this year, I thought it would be nice to say a big “Thank you” to Peter Chapman who works so hard to get our newsletters out on time. Peter is also in charge of our e-mail members newsletters and does an excellent job sending them out. I also would like to say “Thank you” to George and the team at HSP Milner’s who do such a wonderful job printing our newsletters.

Passing Thoughts



Just sending out a big hug to whoever might need one right now

Contacting C.A.T.S.

There are several ways to contact us:

By phone Telephone 01229 869705

By e-mail [moyramm@ yahoo.co.uk](mailto:moyramm@yahoo.co.uk)

By post

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LA12 9RP

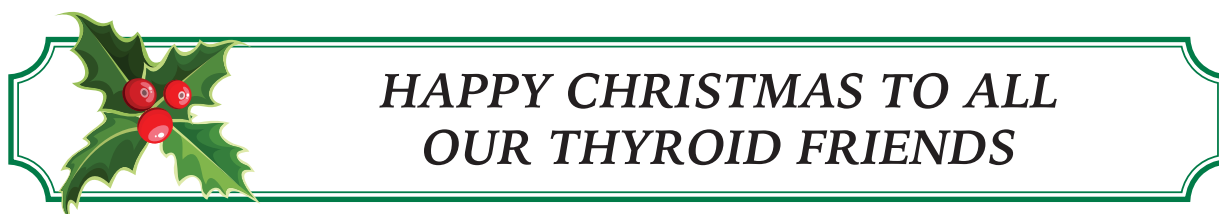
By the website www.cumbriancats.co.uk (use the contact link on the website)

That's all for now folk's

Once again, we have come to the end of this newsletter. I do hope you can all find something of interest. If you would like to contribute to our newsletter please let me know, we will welcome any personal stories about your Thyroid journey. Or anything Thyroid related that you would like to share with us. Don't forget to visit our website while we are not having any open meetings. There's lots of information on the site and I will also be putting up-dates on the site, until our next newsletter comes out in March 2018. We hope everyone has a lovely Christmas and we wish you all a happy and healthy 2018

Best wishes

Moyra



C.A.T.S. information guidelines

Please note that all information supplied to C.A.T.S. will be used in the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any other source

ALL C.A.T.S. VOLUNTEERS WORK TO STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY RULES AT ALL TIMES

Any information produced in this newsletter is to help those people suffering with Thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that all information is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by C.A.T.S. and it is recommended and essential that if in any doubt about your condition that you should always consult your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.

C.A.T.S. recommends that you always seek your doctor's advice



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