

# What is Hyperthyroidism?

an overactive thyroid condition when the thyroid gland makes too much thyroid hormone



The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the front of the neck. An overactive thyroid can speed up the body's metabolism and if left untreated may cause many health issues to the heart, bones, muscles, menstrual cycle, and even affect fertility. Hyperthyroidism typically affects the age group between 20 to 40 years old, and although it can affect anyone, it is about 10 times more common in women than men.

## Symptoms

### An overactive thyroid can cause various symptoms

Symptoms may vary from person to person. Some of the most common symptoms include rapid or irregular heartbeat (tachycardia and arrhythmia), increased sensitivity to heat, shaky hands and muscle weakness, unintentional weight loss despite an increase in appetite, mood swings with increased anxiety, irritability and nervousness, changes to menstrual cycle (in women), and change in bowel activity (especially more-frequent bowel movements.). Sleep quality can also be affected by the overproduction of thyroid hormones leading to increased fatigue and weakness. An enlargement in the thyroid gland may cause goiter (which may appear as a swelling at the base of the neck).

## Possible Causes

### Hyperthyroidism can be linked to multifactorial causes

The thyroid gland produces two main hormones: thyroxine (T-4) and triiodothyronine (T-3). These hormones affect every cell in the body. Hyperthyroidism happens when the thyroid gland puts too much of those thyroid hormones into the bloodstream. Graves' disease (GD) is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. GD is an autoimmune disorder that causes the immune system to attack the thyroid gland and prompts the thyroid to make too much thyroid hormone. Overactive thyroid nodules can also cause thyroid tissue to produce too much thyroid hormone. Thyroiditis - an inflamed thyroid gland - can also cause hyperthyroidism. In some people, over consumption of iodine may trigger the overproduction of thyroid hormone.

## Diet & Nutrition

### Diet & Lifestyle support for Hyperthyroidism

Following a healthy diet has been shown to be an important factor in supporting Hyperthyroidism and having positive clinical outcomes. BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns and use a personalised approach to optimise thyroid function and support symptoms.



NHS. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/overactive-thyroid-hyperthyroidism/>