

Q&A with Dr. Anna Schiwiek:

Hypothyroidism vs. Hyperthyroidism



The thyroid, a small, butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of the front of your neck, plays a crucial role in your overall health. It has an impact on the function of other organs in our bodies such as the heart, brain, liver and kidneys. The thyroid regulates our body temperature and metabolism. When something is out of sync, it can lead to an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) or underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism).

Let's chat with **SMG endocrinologist Dr. Anna Schiwiek** and learn the difference between the two and the unique symptoms for each disorder.

What is the main difference between hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism?

The major difference is the amount of hormone production. For hyperthyroidism, it's easy to remember that 'hyper' means too much – so, the thyroid is over-producing hormones.

Hypothyroidism is the complete opposite. This is when your thyroid is not producing enough hormones and is considered underactive.

What are the main symptoms to watch for?

For hyperthyroidism, symptoms can include:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Fast heartbeat
- Itchy, red skin
- Breaking out into a sweat
- Often feeling hot

Hypothyroidism symptoms may include:

- Unexplained weight gain or trouble losing weight
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Muscle cramps
- Slow heart rate
- Irregular periods
- Change in bowel habits/constipation
- Sensitivity to cold temperatures

How is this diagnosed?

A simple blood test, called 'thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) test, can identify a thyroid disorder.

If the blood test indicates a problem, your doctor may run other tests as well. This may include the levels of T4 and T3 thyroid hormones, as well as thyroid antibody tests.

What are treatment options?

Various medications are available to manage symptoms and regular hormone product. I review each patient's symptoms, other medical conditions and medications on an individual basis so a treatment plan is tailored to achieve the best results.

I always encourage patients to see me to discuss their symptoms. Since many of these symptoms can mimic other disorders, it's important to be evaluated early and get any symptoms under control.

Call (914) 723-8100 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Schiwiek.