

## Doctors urge thyroid test

WASHINGTON (AP) — Feeling a little fatigued? A tad forgetful or depressed? Put on a little weight lately?

They sound like run-of-the-mill complaints, particularly if you have a stressful job or are hitting middle-age.

But those also are some of the frequently overlooked early symptoms of thyroid disease — and a new study estimates 13 million Americans may be undiagnosed.

That's a slightly higher estimate than previously thought, and it comes as some specialists are urging that a simple \$25 thyroid test become a routine part of many adults' doctor visits even if they don't complain of symptoms.

Why? Even mild thyroid problems might cause big consequences: Pregnant women with an underactive thyroid risk having children with lower IQs, and new research shows even a little hypothyroidism can raise cholesterol levels.

Yet thyroid disease is easily treated if people know they have it. How to find out: the TSH blood test.

"We have to get this message out," said Dr. E. Chester Ridgway, the University of Colorado's endocrinology chief. "We've been trying for many years to get primary-care physicians to use the TSH as a part of their screenings," but people don't realize "it's a big problem."

The bow tie-shaped gland in the front of your neck, just below the Adam's apple, causes an amazing variety of health problems because it produces hormones that regulate metabolism and stimulate almost every type of tissue in the body.

For unknown reasons, it can become overactive and speed up certain body functions, or become underactive and slow body functions. Both cause a variety of symptoms once the disease advances enough, what doctors call "overt" thyroid disease.

An underactive thyroid — hypothyroidism — is by far the most common problem. Symptoms are easily mistaken for other conditions: fatigue, weight gain as metabolism slows, depression, forgetfulness, a hoarse voice, mood swings, intolerance to cold.

Symptoms of hyperthyroidism, an overactive gland, are usually more clear: The heart beats fast, sometimes irregularly. Blood pressure rises. Patients sweat easily, feel nervous, sleep poorly. They lose weight without trying, become depressed and confused, develop vision problems or bulging eyes.

Either condition sometimes enlarges the thyroid, so the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends checking your neck.

But you don't have to feel a bump in your neck to have a thyroid problem, stresses Dr. Terry Davies of New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine, editor of the journal *Thyroid* and a proponent of better TSH testing.

Overt thyroid disease raises people's risk of heart disease, bone-thinning osteoporosis and infertility. The call for more testing comes amid concern that mild, even asymptomatic, thyroid failure could be risky.

Ridgway wrote a recent study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* that gave TSH tests to 25,000 people attending health fairs in Colorado. Based on those results, he estimated some 13 million people nationwide may have undiagnosed

thyroid disease, mostly hyperthyroidism.

While thyroid failure is mainly a problem for older people, symptoms often are common to menopause — Ridgway says it actually starts to rise in a woman's 30s, and that older men have more problems more often than women.

Endocrinologists last year urged thyroid tests for pregnant women to cause a mother's underactive thyroid to impair fetal brain development, estimated one in 50 women have thyroidism during pregnancy.

In addition, endocrinologists say mothers suffering postpartum depression need testing to see if thyroidism is to blame.

Ridgway's other finding: thyroid failure caused cholesterol rising. That supports a recent study that concluded mild thyroid failure could be associated with heart attack.

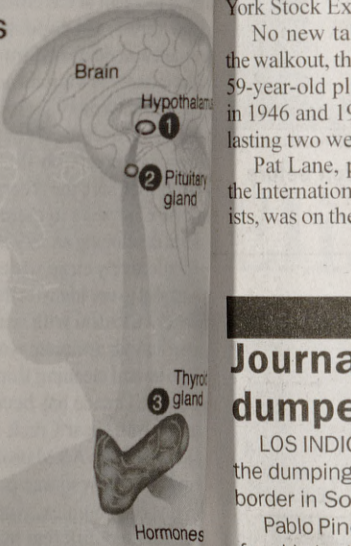
A simple test to detect thyroid stimulating hormone, TSH, in the bloodstream diagnoses the disease. The same blood sample for cholesterol or any other routine test can be checked for TSH.

### Thyroid gland process

The thyroid is the body's regulator, producing hormones essential to the function of most tissues. Here is how the thyroid gland is triggered to release hormones.

- 1 Hypothalamus releases hormone that signals the pituitary gland.
- 2 The pituitary gland makes a thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH).
- 3 TSH causes the thyroid gland to make hormones that regulate metabolism and organ function.

Thyroid disease results when the gland becomes either underactive — producing too little hormone — or overactive, producing too much.



Source: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

Memorial Student Center  
Black Awareness Committee

## Umoja Grill 2000

### Parent's Weekend Bar-b-que

Saturday  
April 15, 2000  
4:00 PM

Sue Haswell Park  
Intersection:  
William J. Bryan and Coulter

Tickets:  
\$5.00 Adults  
\$3.00 Children under 10

Games  
Door Prizes

Dominoes and Spades Tournament



Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.



## Is There Truth in Religion Like Truth in Mathematics and Science?

Walter L. Bradley, Ph.D., P.E.  
Emeritus Professor of Mechanical  
Engineering, Texas A&M University

It is widely believed today that all beliefs about religion and morals are subjective and personal. If this is so, then all beliefs about religion and morality are equally valid, and claims that one's beliefs are true and other's beliefs are false results in the accusation of intolerance. But if all religious truth is subjective and personal, it is also trivial. Is it possible that religious and moral truth could be trans-cultural and objectively true, like truth in mathematics and science? And if so, how could we determine what religious truth claims actually are true?

Rudder 301: Wednesday  
(not Tuesday)

April 12<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 p.m.

Christian Faculty Network @ TAMU  
Spring Lecture Series

## NEED A JOB?

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- If you answered yes to any of these questions, we may have a job for you.



Applications are now being accepted for  
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at Central Park Office  
thru April 17th at 5 p.m.

Employment to begin August 7th  
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THE KIDS  
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