11 Vitamins To Help With *Thyroid Function*

BY

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WellTheory

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Your thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland that sits in the front of your neck and controls many important bodily functions through the hormones it produces. These hormones affect breathing, heart rate, digestion, and body temperature, so when this powerful gland malfunctions it can be devastating.

Thyroid problems may begin when too much or too little thyroid hormones are made, which can result in extreme changes in your weight, digestion, energy, and mood, and even develop into thyroid disease. In addition to the many medicinal options to manage thyroid function, there are also holistic approaches such as diet and supplementation to nourish this small but mighty gland and keep it working efficiently. This article will focus on 11 vitamins and nutrients that can help your thyroid function better. (Source, Source)

What Is *Thyroid Disease*?

Thyroid disease affects about 27 million Americans. When the gland overproduces hormones it is referred to as hyperthyroidism, and underproduction is known as hypothyroidism. Thyroid diseases may be autoimmune in nature, but there are many other causes.

Some causes of hyperthyroidism include:

- Graves' disease, an autoimmune condition
- inflammation of the thyroid gland
- growths, called nodules, on the thyroid gland
- excessive intake of iodine

Some causes of hypothyroidism include:

- Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune condition
- surgery on or radiation to the thyroid gland, used to treat hyperthyroidism or thyroid cancer
- being born with an undeveloped thyroid gland
- medications that interfere with production of thyroid hormones

(Source, Source, Source)

Symptoms of *Thyroid Disease*

People with hypothyroidism as well as those with hyperthyroidism will most likely notice unusual symptoms that showcase the body is off balance. If you have experienced any of these uncomfortable and alarming symptoms, you most likely have sought help from a health care professional to figure out what's going on. Due to the malfunction of the thyroid gland, your body will not be able to keep up with its usual demands to operate normally, creating symptoms that may feel difficult to manage.

Symptoms of *hypothyroidism* include:

- intolerance to cold
- weight gain
- depression
- fatigue
- constipation
- menstrual cycle dysregulation such as light, heavy, or irregular bleeding, or no menstruation at all

Symptoms of *hyperthyroidism* include:

- intolerance to heat
- weight loss
- anxiety and nervousness
- diarrhea
- heart palpitations
- menstrual cycle dysregulation such as light, heavy, or irregular bleeding, or no menstruation at all
- faster heart rate

(Source, Source, Source, Source, Source)

Who Is Affected by *Thyroid Disease*?

Thyroid disorders can affect anyone at any age, whether it presents at birth, develops as you age, or is inherited. Though it is not uncommon to be affected by a thyroid disorder, women are 5 to 8 times more likely to be diagnosed than men. The following factors may put you at a higher risk of developing thyroid disease:

- **genetic predisposition:** Your risk is higher if someone in your family has been diagnosed previously.
- **underlying medical conditions:** You are at higher risk if you suffer from pernicious anemia, Type 1 diabetes, Addison's disease, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögren's syndrome, or Turner syndrome.
- **taking medication that is high in iodine:** Too much iodine can induce or worsen hyperthyroid symptoms, causing similar reactions to iodine deficiency.
- **age**: Women, especially over the age of 50, are at a greater risk due to menopause-related hormonal changes.
- **history of thyroid conditions:** You are at higher risk of thyroid disease if you have had previous treatment for thyroid conditions or cancer.

(Source, Source, Source, Source)

Lifestyle Effects on *Thyroid Function*

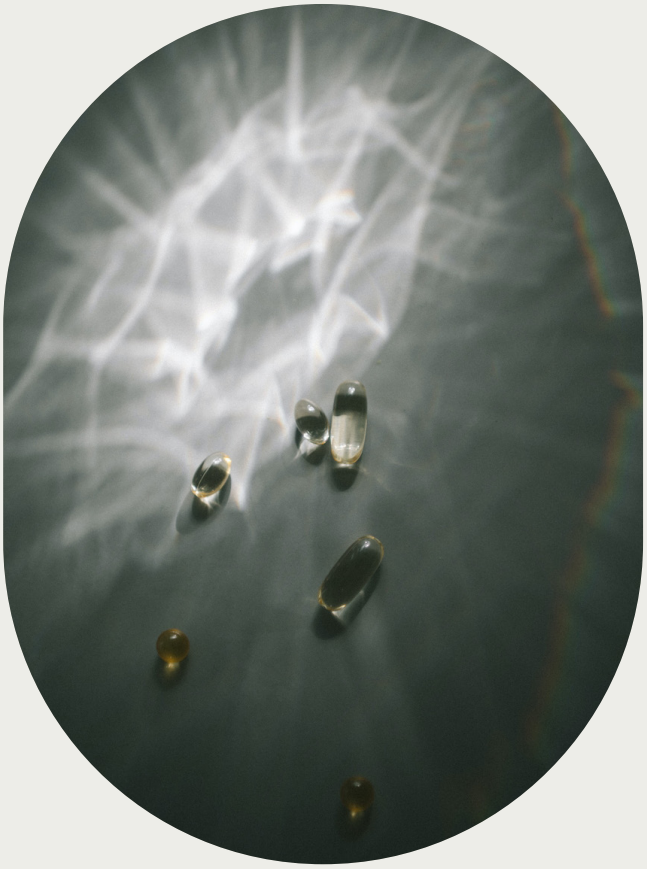
Supporting your thyroid with diet and lifestyle can be an important piece to fueling your overall health and wellbeing while keeping your thyroid functioning optimally. You may be genetically predisposed to thyroid disease, or develop it due to environmental and lifestyle factors, as these both affect how your genes respond to changes in your environment.

Due to the fact that a dysfunctional thyroid may stem from an autoimmune thyroid disease, dietary and lifestyle strategies and using supplements for thyroid health may be useful in managing thyroid function.

Lifestyle factors that may contribute to poor thyroid function include:

- smoking
- consuming alcohol
- nutrient deficiencies
- underlying infections
- excessive stress

(Source)



11 Vitamins to Help With *Thyroid Function*

Vitamins specific to thyroid health are found in food sources as well as dietary supplements, and may be a good option for a more holistic approach to supporting thyroid hormone metabolism. Supplementation may support thyroid function in both overactive and underactive thyroid conditions. Take care to source high quality supplements for optimum thyroid support.

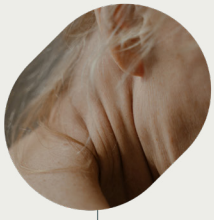
(Source, Source)

Those with hypothyroidism are commonly deficient in vitamin B12 due to poor diet and having other medical conditions that limit absorption of nutrients, such as pernicious anemia, atrophic gastritis, gluten sensitivity, slow emptying of the gut, and an overgrowth of bacteria. Low levels of vitamin B12 can lead to the development of hypothyroidism, and supplementation has been shown to lower thyroid antibodies and improve thyroid function.

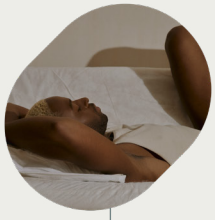
Symptoms Of Low Or Poor *B12* Absorption May Include:

Depression

Memory loss or brain fog



Dementia



Fatigue

Supplementing with vitamin B12 early on in a hypothyroid diagnosis may reverse some cognitive and anemic issues. Food sources of B12 include:

- fish
- meat
- poultry
- eggs
- clams
- beef liver

(Source, Source, Source)

02 Vitamin A

Vitamin A is a group of fat soluble compounds that are involved in the structure and function of the thyroid. As with iron, a vitamin A deficiency may interfere with the uptake of iodine in the thyroid, lowering thyroid hormone levels. This group of compounds plays a huge role in regulating T cells, which are important for healthy immune function and may be an integral piece to the development of thyroid autoimmune disease.

Vitamin A is a micronutrient found highest in liver, fish, and eggs, as well as:

Leafy green vegetables

- spinach
- broccoli

Orange and yellow vegetables

- summer squash
- sweet potatoes
- pumpkin
- carrots
- peppers

Fruits

- cantaloupe
- mango
- apricots

Include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables along with high quality sources of whole foods in your diet to keep your vitamin A levels up and support optimal thyroid health.

(Source, Source)

03 *Vitamin C*

Vitamin C is a water soluble vitamin that is not stored in the body and needs to be replenished daily via food or supplementation. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that protects the thyroid gland from oxidative damage and is useful for restoring thyroid function. Research has shown this vitamin helps those who are on levothyroxine, a synthetic hormone used for goiter or hypothyroidism, absorb it better. Vitamin C-rich foods include fruits and vegetables such as:

- citrus fruits
- kiwi
- cantaloupe
- strawberries
- brussels sprouts
- broccoli

(Source)

04 *Vitamin D*

Vitamin D, sometimes known as the “sunshine vitamin,” is good for many ailments but is especially helpful in supporting a solid immune system. Low vitamin D levels have been linked to onset of autoimmune hypothyroidism, and research has shown that patients with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis are often severely deficient. Due to its anti-inflammatory and immune modulating effects, vitamin D supplementation could reduce the risk of developing a thyroid autoimmune disease.

Your body may be able to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D if you spend enough time in direct sunlight, but it may not be safe or practical to sun yourself every day. Some foods contain small amounts of vitamin D naturally and some are fortified with this critical nutrient, but even if you maintain a healthy, varied diet you may need to take a vitamin D supplement.

- fatty fish such as trout, salmon, tuna, mackerel
- beef liver
- egg yolks
- mushrooms

(Source, Source)

05 *Vitamin E*

Vitamin E is fat soluble and a powerful antioxidant. Similar to vitamin D, E also plays a role in immune health. In terms of thyroid health, vitamin E has the ability to protect your cells from damage that may occur with hyperthyroidism.

This vitamin can be found in food sources such as:

- nuts, especially almonds
- seeds, especially sunflower
- spinach
- broccoli

(Source, Source)

Other Nutrients to Help With *Thyroid Function*

In addition to supplemental vitamins, other nutrients may be useful for thyroid function as well.

06 Iodine

Iodine is a trace mineral essential for thyroid function. This mineral is naturally found in foods such as:

- seaweed
- fish
- seafood
- iodized salt

The amount of iodine in food will vary according to how it is sourced. Fruits and vegetables contain very low amounts of iodine and are not a good source to get your daily intake.

Iodine deficiency is not at all common in the United States, but there are certain factors that could lead to a need for more iodine such as:

- **following a vegan diet** devoid of foods with high amounts of iodine
- **pregnancy, when extra iodine** is needed for the health of the developing fetus
- **over consumption of foods** that impede the uptake of iodine in the thyroid, such as soy, cassava, and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. (This is primarily a problem for people living in areas where iodine deficiency is widespread — not including the United States.)
- **not using iodized salt**

It's important to note there is evidence iodine supplementation can actually make Hashimoto's disease, a common cause of hypothyroidism, worse, and that in cases of Hashimoto's iodine restriction may actually be more beneficial. Regardless of whether you've been diagnosed with a thyroid condition or not, be sure to consult with your health care provider before considering supplementing with iodine — more is not necessarily better. (Source, Source)

07 Iron

Iron deficiency may interfere with the uptake of iodine in the thyroid, limiting the production of thyroid hormones. Conversely, hypothyroidism may cause iron deficiency that may progress to iron deficiency anemia. Supplementing with iron may be helpful in replenishing iron stores for optimal thyroid function, and may help normalize thyroid hormone levels when levothyroxine (a synthetic thyroid hormone replacement) alone isn't working well enough.

Iron can be found in food sources such as:

- lean meats
- seafood
- poultry
- spinach
- peas
- nuts

(Source, Source, Source, Source)

08 *Turmeric*

Turmeric is an ancient Indian spice containing the powerful compound curcumin. This yellow-tinged spice has been used as an anti-inflammatory and has tumor and infection fighting properties. Curcumin is good for reducing the damage of oxidative stress induced by triiodothyronine (T3), one of the two hormones the thyroid produces. Turmeric can be taken in capsule form or tinctures, or of course the spice can be used in food and drinks as well.

(Source, Source)

09 *Magnesium*

Magnesium is a mineral that is essential to a well functioning thyroid and your body in general. Magnesium is important for reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, and magnesium deficiency can cause an array of issues and chronic disease. Needed for hundreds of enzymatic reactions in the body, research has shown that low levels of magnesium may interfere with the uptake of iodine in the thyroid, as well as increased risk of an autoimmune response.

Although a lack of magnesium does not directly cause hypothyroidism, it may spark the inflammation that precedes autoimmune thyroiditis. Supplementing with magnesium can be done via capsule, powder, or oil in addition to food sources such as:

- leafy greens
- nuts
- seeds

(Source, Source)

10 Selenium

Selenium is a trace element found in a variety of foods and available as a supplement. Selenium is found in the thyroid in higher concentrations than in other organs and plays a role in metabolizing thyroid hormones. Selenium deficiency has been associated with hypothyroidism, thyroiditis, and goiter. Selenium supplements are available, but levels can be met nutritionally through food sources as well.

Good sources of selenium include:

- Brazil nuts
- seafood
- eggs
- organ meats
- muscle meats

(Source, Source)

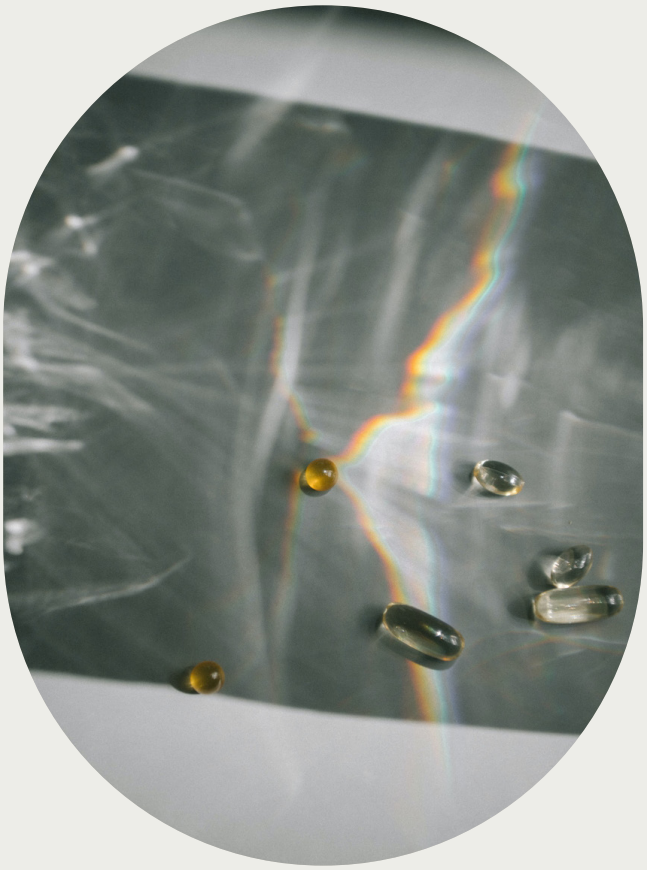
11 Zinc

Zinc is involved in thyroid hormone synthesis, and a deficiency in this trace element can result in hypothyroidism. Thyroid hormones are important in the body's ability to absorb zinc, so if the thyroid does not make enough hormone it will decrease levels of zinc.

Zinc can be supplemented as well as found in foods such as:

- oysters
- meat
- fish
- poultry
- seafood

(Source, Source)



The Bottom Line on Vitamins To Help With *Thyroid Function*

Thyroid health can be supported by focusing on essential vitamins and nutrients included in a diverse, whole foods diet, along with positive lifestyle habits and any prescribed thyroid medication you may be on. The health of your thyroid is important in how you feel each day, so including thyroid healthy vitamins and nutrients in your diet not only supports optimal thyroid function but also improves your quality of life. WellTheory's Care Team can provide you personalized nutrition and lifestyle support to support thyroid health or other autoimmune symptoms you may be experiencing.

A List of Vitamin Food Sources for *Thyroid Health*

If you prefer to add these vitamins into your life through your diet, take this list with you on your next grocery trip!

01 — B12

fish
meat
poultry
eggs
clams
beef liver

02 — Vitamin A

leafy green vegetables
spinach
broccoli

orange and yellow vegetables
summer squash
sweet potatoes
pumpkin
carrots
peppers

fruits
cantaloupe
mango
apricots

03 — Vitamin C

citrus fruits
kiwi
cantaloupe
strawberries
brussels sprouts
broccoli

04 — Vitamin D

fatty fish
beef liver
egg yolks
mushrooms

05 — Vitamin D

nuts, especially almonds
seeds, especially sunflower
spinach
broccoli

06 — Iodine

seaweed
fish
seafood
iodized salt

07 — Iron

lean meats
seafood
poultry
spinach
peas
nuts

08 — Turmeric

fresh turmeric
turmeric tea
turmeric spice powder

09 — Magnesium

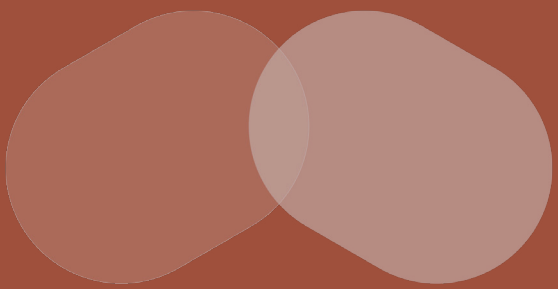
leafy greens
nuts
seeds

10 — Selenium

Brazil nuts
seafood
eggs
organ meats
muscle meats

11 — Zinc

oysters
meat
fish
poultry
seafood



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