



Hashimoto's Disease

Hashimoto's thyroiditis or **chronic lymphocytic thyroiditis** is an autoimmune disease in which the thyroid gland is gradually destroyed by a variety of cell and antibody mediated immune processes. It was the first disease to be recognized as an autoimmune disease. It was first described by the Japanese specialist Dr. Hashimoto Hakaru in Germany in 1912.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashimoto's_thyroiditis

Symptoms

Not everyone with Hashimoto's disease develops hypothyroidism. For those who do, the hypothyroidism may be subclinical—mild and without symptoms. Other people have one or more of these common symptoms of hypothyroidism:

- fatigue
- weight gain
- cold intolerance
- joint and muscle pain
- constipation
- dry, thinning hair
- heavy or irregular menstrual periods and impaired fertility
- depression
- a slowed heart rate

Who is likely to develop Hashimoto's disease?

Hashimoto's disease is about seven times more common in women than men. Although it often occurs in adolescent or young women, the disease more commonly appears between 40 and 60 years of age. Hashimoto's disease tends to run in families. People with other autoimmune disorders are more likely to develop Hashimoto's disease and vice versa. These disorders include

- vitiligo, a condition in which some areas of the skin lose their natural color
- rheumatoid arthritis

- Addison's disease, in which the adrenal glands are damaged and cannot produce enough of certain critical hormones
- type 1 diabetes
- pernicious anemia, a type of anemia caused by inadequate vitamin B12 in the body

Treatment

Treatment generally depends on whether the thyroid is damaged enough to cause hypothyroidism. In the absence of hypothyroidism, some doctors treat Hashimoto's disease to reduce the size of the goiter. Others choose not to treat the disease and simply monitor their patients for disease progression.

Hashimoto's disease, with or without hypothyroidism, is treated with synthetic thyroid hormone.

The exact dose of synthetic thyroid hormone depends on a person's age and weight; the severity of the hypothyroidism, if present; the presence of other health problems; and the use of other medications such as cholesterol-lowering drugs that could interfere with the action of synthetic thyroid hormone.

Doctors routinely test the blood of patients taking synthetic thyroid hormone and make dosage adjustments as necessary. A normal, healthy thyroid and metabolic state can be restored with the use of synthetic thyroid hormone.

<http://www.endocrine.niddk.nih.gov/pubs/Hashimoto/#whois>