



# THYROID FLYER

## Inside

FEATURE:	
Diet, Nutrition and Exercise	1
Carbohydrates GI Chart	8
Thyroid and Weight	9
Graves' Disease and My Weight Challenge	10
Telephone Support Volunteers	11
Meetings and Support Groups	12

Newsletter of Thyroid Australia Ltd

Volume 7 No 2 Sept. 2006

## Diet, Nutrition and Exercise

### Editorial

By Christopher McDermott

Welcome to the winter / spring edition of the Thyroid Flyer. This issue presents an extended article by one of our long-standing committee members, Robyn Koumourou, in association with Dr Ian Gillam of Your Health in Camberwell. Robyn has already written a book, *Running on Empty*, based on her experiences with hypothyroidism.

Diet is an issue we get very many inquiries about. So often, those with hypo conditions finally get their medication and hormone levels sorted out and their next issue is how to deal with their weight. In this Flyer we have included articles which deal with diet and weight issues, including a story from one of our members.

There is plenty of activity happening across the nation thanks to our local support groups. There is a meeting coming up in Brisbane on October 14 and regular meetings in other towns and cities. The next meeting in Melbourne is our AGM in November which will be combined with a thank you function for volunteers. We hope that as many people as possible can come to this afternoon tea / meeting which should be very positive occasion for our organisation and the people who help to make it work.

It is the untiring work of the committee members, telephone volunteers, office volunteers and support group convenors, as well as Brenda in our office, that enables us to help so many people around Australia. Happy reading.

### NEXT PUBLIC MEETINGS

**Brisbane: 14 October 2006**

**Chermside Library**

**Seminar: 2pm to 4pm**

**Melbourne: 12 November 2006**

**Royal Children's Hospital**

**Information Session: 2pm to 5pm**

Includes AGM & Special Afternoon Tea with presentations to thank volunteers

### Diet, Nutrition and Exercise for the Thyroid Patient

By Robyn Koumourou

A well balanced diet, adequate nutrition and regular exercise is a must for all human beings. The food we eat, the water we drink and the oxygen we breathe are the key ingredients to sustain life and keep our bodies and minds healthy. These elements become even more important for those who suffer with any chronic health condition, as they can also be the key in helping the body heal itself and restore normal function, and should be a part of any treatment protocol.

Many thyroid patients are particularly concerned with diet, nutrition, weight and exercise. Dealing with a medical condition that upsets the hormonal balance and produces myriad symptoms can be overwhelming. Thyroid disorders can affect any or every part of the body. The type of symptoms a person experiences depends on human individuality, which is influenced by genetics, upbringing, environment, diet and lifestyle. Therefore, when it comes to any treatment protocol, a multifaceted approach needs to be taken and a treatment program developed that is tailored for the individual. There is not just one diet and exercise regime that will work for all thyroid patients, and thyroid disease can contribute to poor health and weight problems in many patients.

### Challenges Facing Thyroid Patients

To function normally, the cells of our body use thyroid hormones to convert oxygen and food into energy, heat and living tissue. When the thyroid gland becomes underactive or overactive and the metabolism either slows down or speeds up respectively, thyroid patients often have to deal with a multitude of symptoms that affect them emotionally, mentally and physically. Many experience overwhelming tiredness, exhaustion and generalised weakness, and it is not

unusual for them to suffer with varying forms of depression, memory loss and poor concentration. As their body struggles to metabolise food properly, they often lose their appetite, develop poor eating habits, and have difficulty maintaining a healthy weight. Regular exercise can become almost impossible due to profound fatigue, poor muscle strength, and overall aches and pains. Digestive disturbances can also become more pronounced, with upset stomachs, bloating, indigestion and nausea. Stubborn constipation or diarrhoea can develop as food moves through the system at an irregular pace. These abnormalities in digestion can contribute to the poor absorption of nutrients and irritable bowel problems.

Other symptoms that thyroid patients can experience include headaches, fluid retention and shortness of breath, numbness and tingling, chest pain and heart palpitations, skin conditions and hair loss, frequent infections and sometimes imbalances with other hormones within the body. As a thyroid condition progresses more serious problems can also arise, such as changes in cardiac function, elevation of blood pressure and blood cholesterol, poorer glucose controls, and generalised congestion and inflammation throughout the body. Quality of life is often compromised when a thyroid condition is overlooked or poorly treated. It is fairly easy to understand why many thyroid patients become increasingly inactive, have poor exercise tolerance and eventually suffer from nutritional deficiencies. The earlier they are diagnosed and treated appropriately, the less likely they will develop other complications or more serious conditions.

### Weight Control

People often associate thyroid conditions with difficulty with weight control. Generally hypothyroidism causes weight gain

# THYROID AUSTRALIA

## **MEMBER BENEFITS**

Full access to Thyroid Flyer is restricted to paid up members of Thyroid Australia.

Thyroid Australia's services are funded by membership fees and donations from individual member of the public.

Membership is not expensive and your money goes towards the cost of maintaining and hosting this site, staffing our office, producing our newsletter and researching thyroid problem an treatments.

Please visit the About Us section of our web site for details on how you can join Thyroid Australia and help us help others just like you.