

C.A.T.S. GIVING THYROID SUPPORT TO PATIENTS FOR OVER 25 YEARS

Contacting us

There are a few ways to contact us

By telephone: **01229 869705**

By post: **The C.A.T.S. Office, The Old Cottage, Garden Terrace,
Baycliffe, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 9RP.**

By email: **moyramm@yahoo.co.uk**

Or by our website: **www.cumbriancats.co.uk.**

And use the contact us button

Best Wishes

Moyra x

C.A.T.S. information guidelines

Please note that all information supplied to C.A.T.S. will be used in the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any other source

ALL C.A.T.S. VOLUNTEERS WORK TO STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY RULES AT ALL TIMES

Any information produced in this newsletter is to help those people suffering with Thyroid disease.

Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that all information is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by C.A.T.S. and it is recommended and essential that if in any doubt about your condition that you should always consult your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.

C.A.T.S. recommends that you always seek your doctor's advice

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HOPE

C.A.T.S

CUMBRIA ADVISORY THYROID SERVICE
GIVING HOPE TO THYROID PATIENTS EVERYWHERE

Welcome Everyone

Hello and a very big warm welcome to everyone especially our new members who recently joined our group. We hope everyone has been able to enjoy our recent spell of fine sunny weather. A little bit of sunshine helps us to feel much better as it helps to raise our feel-good hormones making us feel much happier and more positive about things. As usual our C.A.T.S. office has been busy with lots of phone calls, e-mail and letters to answer. Don't forget if you do ring (01229 869705) and I am not able to take your call please leave a message with your name and phone number so I can get back to you as soon as I am free. Our answer machine is always available for you to use and all messages left on the answer machine are confidential so please don't be afraid to use this service. You can also e-mail me on moyramm@yahoo.co.uk if you prefer. May 2025 marks the start of our 29th year of working in our community providing advice and support to Thyroid patients and their families and also patients awaiting diagnosis. This is quite an achievement for a small support group like C.A.T.S. On May 25th we also celebrated world Thyroid Day this event is when all Thyroid support groups and Thyroid charities come together to raise awareness of Thyroid problems and the impact they can have on your life and also highlight the poor care many Thyroid patients receive. C.A.T.S estimate there are over 3.5 million patients diagnosed with Thyroid issues in the UK and also another 1.1 million people undiagnosed or even misdiagnosed. Thyroid symptoms can mimic other health problems but with so much medical knowledge being readily available this situation should not be happening so please help us to raise awareness of Thyroid conditions as the sooner you are diagnosed the less chance there is of other Thyroid health related conditions developing.

SUMMER 2025

Thank You

A massive big "thank you" to everyone who has sent get well messages for myself as I work through several health issues and condolence messages for Gill and her family following the sudden passing of Gill and Dave's daughter Katheryn at Christmas. This has been a difficult time for both Gill and myself and we do appreciate the support that has been shown to us. Gill is still away from the office at the moment so unfortunately, we are still unable to host any coffee shop meetings. During the last few months, we have had to make a few changes to the way we run our group. However, we still want our group to continue as a support group and are still offering as many of our usual services as we can. Please bear with us as we work through this difficult time and get back to normal again.

Thyroid Friends/Gold Stars

Our Thyroid friends club was set up in 2005 to give extra support and guidance to Thyroid patients. Members will receive at least 4 newsletters each year along with news updates, invites to any special events we host and information and advice specially tailored to your own Thyroid condition. Membership of our Thyroid friends club is just £6.00 each year which is incredibly good value considering some support groups do charge as much as £20.00 or more for membership. The money we get from membership subscriptions is our main source of funding so if you can support us by renewing your membership, we would be very grateful as many support groups are having to close due to lack of support and funding and we do not want that to happen to C.A.T.S. Please also tell your friends about our group and help to spread the word about Thyroid issues and the impact they can have on your life.

*** Don't forget if you receive a gold star form along with your newsletter this means that your membership subscription is due, we are only able to accept payment by cash and cheques at the moment but are hoping to have other options available soon. A massive big thank you to everyone who have sent extra money or postal stamps as donations with their membership subscription for our running costs. We really appreciate this extra support for our group.

Different brands of Levothyroxine

Many pharmacies are now struggling to receive supplies of some prescription medication which could mean that you may receive a different brand to what you usually do. For some patients this may not be a problem, but other patients may not feel as well with the different brand. The reason for this is each brand of T4 contains its unique combination of fillers, binders, preservatives and additives along with the prescribed dose of T4. Some patients can react to these extra ingredients and start to experience extra side effects such as extra tiredness, joint pain or gastric problems and other health issues that they don't usually experience. I personally struggle with the "Teva" brand of T4, but many members are fine with this brand so it's all about finding a brand of T4 that suits you and staying with that brand if you can, if your usual pharmacist can't supply your medication needs, you may find you have to shop around and find one that does. Please contact me 01229 869705 or 07721575153 for further details about this subject.

Multi Vitamins and Thyroid conditions

Many patients often buy multi vitamin supplements as a way of boosting their general health as they contain a mix of the vitamin and minerals, we need to stay healthy. However, many of these supplements do contain Iodine which can be toxic to our Thyroid gland. We do need Iodine to help our Thyroid to function but the amount we need is only small, we actually, only need 140mcg of Iodine per day. If our Thyroid is underactive (especially if you have Hashimoto's the auto-immune form) This means that our Thyroid is not able to process the Iodine properly and change it into T4/T3 hormones so any extra that we consume will stay in our body causing a toxic effect on our body and especially our Thyroid glands and in some cases make our thyroid even more under-active. I have seen some health supplements containing as much as 300mcg which is more than double the amount we need. We must also remember that many foods we eat do contain Iodine and our Levothyroxine pills also contain an element of Iodine, so we can see how easy it can be to consume too much Iodine. If our Thyroid's are over-active, we will have too much T4/T3 circulating in our body which also means too much Iodine so taking a multi vitamin with Iodine included could make your Thyroid even more over-active leading to toxicity of our whole body. There are some multi vitamins available without Iodine if you really want to take a multi vitamin supplement but C.A.T.S. advice is to get your GP to check which nutrients you are short of and only supplement those but please seek the advice of a medical professional before buying any supplements or over the counter remedies as some products can react with medications you take and cause extra problems. (B12, Iron, Vitamin D, Folic Acid) are common things that can be depleted with Thyroid patients *** We would also like to add a warning to take care when buying internet products there are many genuine companies out there but there are also some companies that are not genuine and can sell products that cause you a great deal of harm. It's better to be safe rather than sorry.

Taking your Levothyroxine

The best time to take your Levothyroxine is first thing in the morning on its own with a glass of water. You can then have your shower etc and have your breakfast. Doing it this way gives your medication chance to get down to your liver where some of the T4 is processed into T3, the unprocessed T4 is stored in your liver ready to be converted to T3 when needed. T3 is the active hormones that our body uses for every action it makes. We recommend allowing at least 30 minutes to 1 hour between having your pills and eating as this allows the T4/T3 conversion process to take place. You may have noticed a warning on some Thyroid medication packs not to take your pills with a cup of tea or coffee this is because the caffeine in these drinks can block your Thyroid pills and stop them working properly. Even decaffeinated tea or coffee can have this effect. However, it is fine to have a cup of tea or coffee with your breakfast as long as you have left the 30 minutes/1 hour gap. Some members tell me they take their Thyroid pills in the early hours of the morning after doing a bathroom trip. It is fine to do this as it leaves you free to get up at your normal time and have a shower and breakfast when you are ready without having to worry. I am often asked why we can't just take our pills with our breakfast but if we did that the pills would be all mixed up with our food making it difficult for our liver to process and not give us the benefit of our medication.

Going on Holiday

At this time of the year, we usually give you some tips to prepare for your holidays. Going away can be a bit stressful especially if you have long term health problems and are trying to make sure everything goes smoothly but hopefully these tips will help you to enjoy your time away.

** If you are going abroad for your holidays, please remember that your Levothyroxine needs to be stored in a cool place (below 25c) If it is stored in hot conditions, it will deteriorate and be less effective. It is also a good idea to keep all your medication in its original packages to save any problems at customs. Taking a printed copy of your NHS prescription is also a good idea so you can verify that your medication has been prescribed by a medical professional.

** The rules about travelling abroad have changed since we came out of the EU So please check with your travel agent to confirm the rules that apply to the country you intend travelling to Also check your passport and any other travel documents are up to date and fully valid. You must also have full travel insurance cover to cover any unexpected events that may happen. Also make sure that you declare all your medical conditions as failure to do this can invalidate your travel insurance. Failure to do this can lead to high medical costs if any unforeseen events do happen.

** Lots of Thyroid patients have very dry thin skin that can easily get damaged so don't forget to pack plenty moisturizers and high factor sun cream to prevent your skin getting damaged Also make sure that you drink plenty fluids to keep your body hydrated this will also help protect your skin from being damaged. Becoming dehydrated is serious so please don't put your body at risk

** Health care rules have changed for people travelling abroad and different rules apply to different countries so check with your travel agent as to what is covered and what isn't so you don't get nasty surprises if the worse thing happened and you took ill or had an accident while on holiday, If you are unlucky and need medical help please be aware that you may need to pay for this treatment depending which country you are visiting we've already mentioned the importance of declaring all your medical conditions so you don't invalidate any insurance cover so you get the most benefit you can from any insurance cover.** if you are on holiday in the UK and need medical care you can access the care you need by going to an emergency GP /a NHS walk in centre/ or a NHS medical centre

** If you go away from home it's important to have details such as your name address and date of birth details on you so people know who you are in case of an emergency Its also handy to have a list of any medication you take and any medical conditions such as Heart issues, Diabetes, Epilepsy or other serious health conditions C.A.T.S. have some pocket sized cards that are suitable to record this information and will fit into your handbag /wallet quite easily. The cards are free so if you would like one, please just let me know. Another thing that is becoming popular is to have an ICE number on your mobile phone (ICE stands for in case of emergency) You can add several ICE numbers such as your next of kin or a close relative or friend or anyone who can act on your behalf should you not be able to do this yourself This idea is being recognised by all emergency services world-wide and I think it is a really good idea as we never know when the unexpected is going to happen

** Don't forget to have all the necessary injections before you travel, Covid and other infections are still around so wash your hands regularly or use anti-bacterial hand washes to limit the spread of germs. Infections and germs spread in crowded areas so avoid these areas if you can but if you can't please use a face mask to limit infection risks

** if you are disabled and on disability benefits, please make sure you know the rules about how long you can be away from home etc as the rules are changing in line with the new benefit rules coming into place

** And last of all we hope everyone has a lovely holiday break away and come back feeling refreshed and ready to face the challenges of life. If you can't manage a holiday away, we hope you can find time for a little bit of me time and relaxing in this beautiful area we are lucky to live in

Levothyroxine causes Osteoporosis

Yes, I must admit this headline sounds scary; it relates to a small study done in North America where a small group of Thyroid patients taking Levothyroxine were found to have developed Osteoporosis so because of this, the study has concluded that patients taking Levothyroxine are at risk of Osteoporosis. This is a serious health condition that causes weak porous bones that fracture easily especially in our older population. The study did not say what dose of T4 these patients were taking or how long they had taken Levothyroxine for, or even the ages of these patients so I feel more research needs to be done before we can say if this information is correct or not. I am aware that many of our members and supporters have Osteoporosis including myself but there are many reasons why patients develop this health condition. I was given an Osteoporosis diagnosis when I was in my early thirties and didn't get my Thyroid diagnosis and start taking Levothyroxine until my late forties so from my own point of view, I feel the reason for my Osteoporosis diagnosis is more a genetic link rather than any other cause. From my own research there seems to be several reasons why you can develop Osteoporosis,

** being of slim build, low weight and small boned can lead to poor bone quality.

** having any gastric conditions can mean you don't digest foods properly leading to poor nutrition and weaker bones.

** taking Steroids for any inflammatory health condition can also predispose you to weaker bones.

** acid reducing pills for acid reflux etc can also cause a reduction in bone strength.

** people crash dieting or having a very poor appetite and eating very little food, or having anorexia or any other eating disorder is also a cause of Osteoporosis.

** If, you have an over-active Thyroid because your Thyroid gland is producing too much T4, usually due to antibody activity, goitres or nodules this can also be a cause.

** taking too higher dose of Levothyroxine is also linked to poor bone strength but if you have regular blood tests to check your Thyroid levels this shouldn't happen.

** genetics and the natural ageing process are also causes.

** hormone in-balance problems can also disrupt your calcium/ vitamin D balance causing weaker bones.

As you can see there are many reasons for Osteoporosis to develop and if you have read the original article I mentioned or, are unlucky and have been diagnosed with this condition please don't panic as there are lots of treatments available. Eating a good healthy diet, along with making sure your Thyroid levels are at the right level and doing as much weight bearing and bone strengthening exercises as you can, such as walking, dancing and stair climbing will all help. Booking an appointment with a physiotherapist, osteopath or personal trainer is also a good idea as they can work out a fitness plan for you but please make sure you tell them all the health problems you have as some exercises are unsuitable for certain health conditions.

Thyroid and Mental Health Problems

World Mental Health Day was recently celebrated across most countries, mental health conditions can affect as many as 1 out of 4 people and can be very traumatic when an episode occurs, but I wanted to highlight the important link between Thyroid problems and mental health. Research has shown that low levels of the hormone Serotonin is often a trigger for mental health issues starting. The Thyroid hormone T3 is also responsible for the production of Serotonin and when our Thyroids start to fail our T3 levels are one of the first things to drop below the levels needed for our bodies to work properly. In fact, Depression is one of the first signs that our Thyroids may not be working properly which is why I feel it is important to test your T3 levels but sadly this hormone is not tested routinely on the NHS any longer. Anti-depressants are usually the first line of treatment and some anti-depressants do raise your serotonin levels giving us the feel-good factor. However new ways of treating mental health problems are being trailed. Things such as low-level exercise like walking, swimming and aerobics can all help to give us the feel-good factor and raise our serotonin level. Also, popular are therapies such as Acupuncture, Reflexology, Massage and Reiki healing along with talking therapies and Connective Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and research shows these treatments do help some patients. Some patients turn to herbal remedies to help with mental health problems; however, you must check with your GP to make sure the remedy you choose is safe to take and doesn't react with any medication you take

Key-rings, Pens and Car stickers

Don't forget we still have some Key-rings for sale, along with some pens Rachael Biggins (Rachael's Crafts face-book page) has just added to her website. For more details about these products contact Rachael on her mobile 07746893766, We also have free car stickers to raise awareness about our C.A.T.S group. Please contact me if you would like one of these stickers so I can send one to you.

Question Time

What would you have liked to have known when you first got your Thyroid condition diagnosed? please send your answers to the C.A.T.S. office and I will do an article about this.

The Miracle of Friendship

Theres a miracle called "friendship" that dwells within our hearts
We don't know when it happens or when it gets to start
But the happiness it brings will always give a special lift
And you realise that friendship is a most precious gift

Saving us pennies

One of the biggest expenses we have in running our group is the postage cost. Did you know that we can send your newsletter to you by e-mail. So, if you are internet connected, please send your name, e-mail address and phone number so I can add you to our electronic mailing list. If you change your mind and want to revert back to a postal copy, we are quite happy for you to do this

That's all for now Folks

Once again, we have come to the end of our newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the various articles we have included in this edition. If you want me to write about any special topics please let me know and I will try to include the topic in one of our newsletters. We hope everyone has a happy healthy summer

We will be back again with our late summer update in September until then keep well, keep safe and keep happy everyone