

HOPE

C.A.T.S

CUMBRIA ADVISORY THYROID SERVICE

GIVING HOPE TO THYROID PATIENTS EVERYWHERE

Welcome Everyone

Hello and a warm welcome to everyone, especially our new members who have joined us recently. Apologies to everyone who were expecting our usual June news up-date, we were unable to publish this as planned but have done a late summer edition instead so we hope you will find something of interest to you in this newsletter. We hope everyone is keeping well and have enjoyed the lovely summer sunshine we have had over the last few weeks. There is no doubt about it that a little bit of sunshine makes you feel so much better. For our members who have managed to have a break away we hope you have all enjoyed your break away and have come back feeling refreshed. Some members will not have been able to get away this summer so if that is the case, please don't forget to grab yourself some "me time" if you can. The pace of modern life is so hectic these days so we all need time to chill a little bit.

LATE SUMMER 2026 UP - DATE

Thyroid Friends/Gold Stars

C.A.T.S. wish to thank everyone for the wonderful support we get from our members and supporters. It doesn't matter how you support us, renewing memberships, sending us cash or postage stamps donations, volunteering or even working quietly in the background, all of these are important to us and without this level of support we simply would not be able to carry on as a support group. So please continue to support us in any way you can, Our Thyroid Friends club was set up in 2005 to give extra support to our members. To join our club, it costs just £6.00 per year and this is our main source of income for running the group. We believe in keeping our price affordable so as not to exclude anyone from joining the group so if you can continue to support us by continuing to be a member, we would be most grateful. *** If your newsletter has a gold star form enclosed inside, this indicates your membership subscription is now due. You can pay by cash, cheques (made payable to Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service) or if you prefer PayPal or BACS (please contact me for details of how to make a payment for these last 2 methods)

Blood Tests Normal

How many members have been told this by their GP after having Thyroid blood tests done but still didn't feel well. So, what does normal mean, unfortunately all normal means is your blood test results falls somewhere in the normal range. In South Cumbria our T4 normal range goes from 7.9 to 14.0 so even if your blood levels were near the bottom of the range or right at the top this would be classed as normal but it's quite possible you may still not feel well and all it may need is a dosage adjustment to make you feel a bit better. However Thyroid treatment may not be as simple as that as Thyroid hormones depend on good levels of B12, Vitamin D, Iron, Folate and Ferritin to convert the T4 over to T3. T3 is the active hormone that our body uses for every single action it makes, so it is vital to have good levels of Thyroid hormones and all the co-factor vitamin and minerals. It is common for many Thyroid patients to be low in B12, Iron, Vitamin D, Folate and Ferritin but these vitamins and minerals are not routinely tested by your GP. So, if you have been told your blood test is normal and you still don't feel well, please ask your GP to test your vitamin and mineral levels. We are all different the way our body reacts to medication and what suits one patient may not be right for another patient. I do have a suggested blood test range information sheet for the South Cumbria area that I can send out to anyone who would like one. Another thing that can happen is even when your T4 and your vitamin and mineral levels are good your body may not be able to convert the T4 to T3. This usually only affects a small group of patients and can be due to a faulty gene, please see the article about T3 on the next page as I have covered the T3 subject in more detail

T3 (Tri-iodothyronine)

A normal healthy Thyroid gland will produce small amounts of T1, T2, T3 hormones, along with a larger amount of T4 hormone, your Thyroid also produces the hormone Calcitonin which regulates your calcium levels in your body. The T1 and T2 hormones only play a minor in-active part in your body. T4 is the main hormone made by your Thyroid gland and acts like a storage hormone. Your liver and various other Thyroid receptors in your body convert the T4 into T3 so it can be used by every part of your body to help it function properly. T3 is a quick acting hormone that does not stay in your body very long so it is vital to have a good store of T4 ready to be converted to T3 to be used when needed. When your Thyroid starts to malfunction, it will usually produce less T4 slowing down your body (Under-active) or produce to much T4 making our body speed up (Over-active). Patients who have an over-active diagnosis are usually treated with anti-Thyroid medication to bring their levels of T4 down to normal. Patients who have an under-active diagnosis will be prescribed T4 (Levo-Thyroxine) to make up the short-fall of what your body is not producing. This T4 is then converted into T3 in your body the same way it would do if your Thyroid was healthy. However, there are a small group of patients who can not convert the T4 to T3 usually due to a faulty gene preventing this happening. Patients in this group used to be able to get T3 on prescription from the NHS but the ruling was changed when the company supplying T3 increased the price dramatically and NHS said they could no longer afford to prescribe this medication. The Facebook group (Improve Thyroid Treatment (ITT) campaign) have successfully worked hard to have this guidance changed. So, if you are a patient in the group needing T3 medication the new rules are that you should be able to have T3 prescribed via an Endocrinologist if you can show you have a need for this. However, some areas of the country are still working along with the old guidelines and not prescribing T3 to patients who need it. I would be interested to know how many C.A.T.S. members have been told they need T3 but can not have it supplied on the NHS as I feel this is unacceptable. T3 can be bought quite cheaply from countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy and France but I feel it is wrong that patients are having to buy medication in this way. Please let me have your thoughts on this as I will be doing a follow up article on this subject at a later date. Meanwhile please consider supporting the ITT group as they actively campaign for better treatment for all Thyroid patients everywhere

Cholesterol and the Thyroid link

Quite a few C.A.T.S. members often phone me to say their GP has just told them that they need to go on Statins as their Cholesterol level is a bit high. Did you know there is a link between high Cholesterol and Under-active Thyroid. I will explain in laymen terms so as not to confuse anyone with medical terms If your Thyroid levels are low and the co-factor minerals and vitamins are also low it is quite possible to find your Cholesterol levels going higher than they should be. This is because Cholesterol is made in your liver and also the T4 /T3 conversion process takes place in the liver sharing the same liver pathways. If your T4 is low there is less hormone to convert to T3 and your liver does not work as good as it should this results in higher Cholesterol levels in your blood. Sometimes an increase in Thyroid medication and improving your vitamin and mineral levels can bring your Cholesterol back to normal but in other cases patients will need to take Statins. Statins have a reputation for causing bad effects on your body however, the newer brands that are becoming available are more patient friendly. Plant Sterols or Red Yeast Rice Capsules are also worth trying as these can help lower your Cholesterol levels if you can't or don't want to take Statins. As usual please check with your GP before taking any non- prescription remedies to make sure they don't inter-act with any medication you take Just for guidance I have included our suggested Cholesterol blood levels.

Total Cholesterol should be below 5 (high risk patents below 4)

None HDL (bad one) below 4,

LDL (bad one) below 3 (high risk patients below 2)

HDL (good one) above 1

Over the Counter Remedies

Just a reminder that if you are planning to take any over the counter products, supplements or herbal remedies, please check with your pharmacist or doctor before taking them. As some products may re-act with your medication. This is especially important when you take multiple kinds of medication as the more kinds you take the more chance there is of you having a reaction.

Vitamin D

I have already mentioned the importance of Vitamin D and the role it plays in our body. Did you know one source of this vitamin is sunshine. So, after the lovely summer we have had most people will be thinking their vitamin D levels will be fine. However, this may not be the case because these days most people use high factor sun creams to block out the harmful sun rays but these creams can also block your body from getting the Vitamin D too. So, if you take Vitamin D as a supplement you may want to continue taking them even when the sun is shining. However, C.A.T.S do suggest you get your levels checked first just to make sure, as vitamin D levels that are too high are just as bad as having very low levels

Coffee Shop Meetings

We all know how much our members enjoy coming along to our Coffee Shop meetings for a coffee and a chat. Unfortunately, we are unable to host any meetings at the moment but are hoping to re-start these meetings again soon. We are also looking for ideas for new venues to host these meetings so if anyone has any idea's please let me know. We need somewhere that is easily accessible (no difficult steps etc), on a bus route and nearby car parking. Don't forget our meetings are very informal and open to everyone and are particularly helpful to newly diagnosed patients

Anxiety Attacks and Panic Attacks

It is common for Thyroid patients to experience unpleasant panic or anxiety attacks from time to time especially when our Thyroid is off balance. Here is a simple way to control these attacks

- Breathe deeply through your nose and out through your mouth several times
- Slowly look around you and find the following things
- 5 things you can feel
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell (or imagine 2 smells you like)
- 1 emotion you can feel

If you practice this every-time you feel a panic or anxiety attack coming on, this will help you get back in control. It will take a bit of practice at first but eventually you will notice a difference in the attacks, and as time goes by, they will become less and less

Update from Moyra

Unfortunately, the treatment I had at Leeds for my Trigeminal neuralgia/ Occipital neuralgia hasn't worked as well as I hoped, so I am waiting to go back to Leeds to see my neurosurgeon to see what the next step will be. Meanwhile we have postponed the coffee shop meetings for a few weeks, but will be continuing with all other C.A.T.S. services. With it becoming more difficult to get appointments with GP's C.A.T.S. services offer a valuable role in our community as we can offer free Thyroid advice and information to everyone

T3 and Heart Failure

I have already mentioned the T3 situation where Thyroid patients who need to take T3 are unable to get this provided by the NHS. One of the reasons given by the powers that be for not prescribing T3 to Thyroid patients was that there was no evidence to prove it worked for patients. I don't need to take T3 myself however, I have personally seen the difference T3 can make to patients who have problems converting T4 to T3 and I am sure that any patients who do have a conversion issue and have been prescribed T3 in the past will all say the same thing. I was very pleased recently to read an article about a trial that had taken place where a group of patients who had heart failure had been prescribed T3 resulting in an improvement in their heart failure. As far as I am aware these patients did not have Thyroid problems but the fact that there was an improvement in their heart function shows that T3 can have a positive effect on our body. This trial is only in its early stages so a lot more research needs to be done before discissions can be made to see if T3 is suitable for heart failure patients and hopefully evidence will also come up to show Thyroid patients with conversion problems can benefit from T3 too.

Saving us Pennies

We now have nearly 100 members signed up to receive their newsletters by e-mail. This is saving us quite a bit of money in postal cost. We understand that this way of receiving your newsletter does not suit everyone so we are quite happy to send newsletters by post for anyone who prefers this method. However, if you would like to try the e-mail way. Please let me have your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address so I can add you to our list. If you are not happy receiving electronic newsletter's we can switch you back to postal copies anytime you want.

Taking our Medication

As we have some new members recently joined us, I thought I would include this information in our newsletter. Levo-Thyroxine needs to be taken first thing in a morning with a glass of water. You need to wait 30 to 40 minutes before eating or drinking anything, as your medication has to get down to your liver ready for the T4/T3 conversion process to take place. If you mix food, drinks, supplements or other medications with your T4 you will not get the full effect of your Levo-Thyroxine. Many members go off to have a shower etc while waiting until its time to have breakfast. Some members need to take several medications in a morning so once you have waited the 30/40 minutes you can safely take any extra medication you need. Some members take vitamin and mineral supplements if this is the case. Any supplements should be taken at least 4 hours after any medications you take as some supplements react with various medications you may be taking.

TEVA brand of T4

I have often mentioned the TEVA brand of T4 and how some patients can not tolerate this brand. I am one of these patients so I have “Mercury Pharma only”
printed on my prescription, however the other day when I collected my pills. The TEVA brand had been dispensed with the “Mercury Pharma only” label attached to the box making it look like I was getting my Mercury Pharma pills when I was not. After several phone calls I did manage to get the Eltroxine brand which is the same as Mercury Pharma. Some patients are fine with TEVA but if you are not, please check your medication when you collect it.

Website/ Facebook Page

While we are not having meetings, did you know there is lots of useful information on our website. We have over 40 information sheets covering various subjects linking in with Thyroid dysfunction. You can download and print out these information sheets for your own reference. For our members who do not have access to the internet we can send this information out to you via our postal information service. If you can’t see the information, you need please let me know so I can help you. Our helpline number 01229 869705 is available 24/7, if we are not available to answer your call when you ring please leave your name and number on our answer machine along with your e-mail address and we will return your call as soon as possible. Our Facebook page is also regularly updated with news from our group

That’s all for now folks

Sadly, we have come to the end of our newsletter.
We hope you all enjoy reading our news and views.
Take care everyone, See you again soon



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

SUPPORTED BY

Supported by The National Lottery through Awards for All