

# 10 Things to Consider for Your Next Appointment

*with a Thyroid Health Care Professional*

Support provided by:

abbvie

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## GET ORGANIZED

Before your appointment gather all your medical information including your insurance card, emergency contact information, family medical history, allergies, and relevant paperwork such as previous lab work. This information will be important to share with your health care professional so they can best evaluate your personal condition.

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## WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Consider your overall health, how you're sleeping, your diet, your exercise routine, and any concerns you may have mentally or physically. Taking some time before the visit to write it all out will help you and your health care professional make the most of your appointment. Below are some recommended questions.

- Where is the thyroid located, and what does it do?
- What are the differences between hypothyroid and hyperthyroid patients, and what are the symptoms of each?
- What is thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), how is it measured, and what should my target number be?
- What else besides TSH levels are important for making sure my thyroid condition is under control?
- Why are more people than ever being diagnosed with thyroid cancer, and should I be checked for it?
- What is the difference between a generic thyroid-hormone pill and a brand-name thyroid-hormone pill?
- What time of day is best to take my thyroid-hormone pill?
- May I take my thyroid medication with food, other medications, vitamins, or supplements?
- Can any of my other medications affect my thyroid?

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## BRING A LIST OF ANY MEDICATIONS OR SUPPLEMENTS YOU ARE TAKING INCLUDING DOSAGE LEVELS

For example, Biotin supplements can interfere with thyroid function tests by showing falsely low TSH levels. The more information you provide your health care professional, the better they can take care of you during your visit.

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## MAKE A LIST OF SYMPTOMS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING INCLUDING WHEN YOU ARE NOT FEELING YOUR BEST

Are you noticing your symptoms are better or worse in the mornings? Keeping a symptoms journal will help you keep track of your health and if treatment adjustments are needed.

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## MAKE A LIST OF ANY CHANGES IN YOUR ROUTINE

Think about your routine and list any changes you have noticed. For example, are you experiencing fatigue, unexplained changes in weight, depression, anxiety, changes in memory, joint or muscle pain, trouble sleeping, fast or irregular heartbeat, or any other changes in your daily routine?

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## ARRIVE ON TIME FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Arriving early or on time allows you to not rush when filling out any necessary paperwork including important information about your medical history.

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## TAKE NOTES DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

Be sure to bring a notepad and pen, or your cell phone to write down what you discuss. Taking notes also allows you to come back to them later when you have a follow-up appointment. If you experience memory or cognitive difficulties, consider bringing someone with you to your appointment who can assist in notetaking and communicating any relevant information to your health care professional.

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## MEDICATION

Ask your health care professional if the other medications or supplements you are taking can interfere with thyroid hormone replacement or affect your TSH levels (if so, you should have your TSH levels checked again). Also let your health care professional know if there has been a change made in the levothyroxine prescription you received from the pharmacy, including changes made by your insurance company (for example: one brand change to another, a brand change to a generic, one generic changed to another generic), as this will require testing your TSH levels again to ensure you are receiving the correct dosage. It is important to make sure you take your thyroid medication exactly as prescribed by your health care professional.

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## FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow through with your health care professional's recommendations and refer back to your appointment notes. Be honest and share if you have forgotten to take your medication, are having trouble paying for it, or have any other concerns. This will allow your health care professional to discuss treatment adjustments that will best support you.

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## STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL EVEN AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

Sometimes a new medication or treatment plan might not work well for your personal situation. Keeping open communication will empower you to advocate for your health and discuss treatment monitoring and adjustment options. Remember, you are the leader of your health.