

Thyroid Cancer

Description:

Thyroid Cancer is a malignant lump or nodule found at the base of the neck where the butterfly-shaped thyroid gland is located. The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormones which effects all cells in the body, measures 1.5-2.5 inches and regulates the body's temperature, heart rate, metabolism and even mood. Thyroid nodules commonly occur affecting 90% of people by the age of 80 years. Most nodules are benign, but 1% are malignant. Seventy-five percent of Thyroid Cancers occur in women from thirty to fifty years of age (Clayman, 2018). Dr. Sciamano, Naturopath, states her belief why so many thyroid issues affect women was due to their merciless negative self-talk and shaming (Sciamano, N.D). Thankfully the prognosis of thyroid cancer is very good, one of the most curable cancers with a 98% recovery rate.

Treatment of Thyroid Cancer commonly includes a partial or total thyroidectomy. In some cases, a thyroidectomy is followed up with a single capsule dose of radioactive iodine. What is interesting about Thyroid Cancer as compared to other cancers is that the thyroid will absorb the radioactive iodine destroying the cancer, yet the other types of cells are mostly unaffected. Some damage to saliva glands, tear ducts, breast tissue and bone marrow may occur (Clayman, 2018).

In 2000 at a routine physical my doctor found a lump at the side of my neck. After further tests it was determined I should have a partial thyroidectomy. Three-quarters of my thyroid gland was removed, and it was discovered the nodule had a few cancer cells. The mayo clinic determined no further treatment was needed since the cancer was totally encapsulated by the nodule. Since I only have one-quarter thyroid remaining, I must take thyroid replacement (Synthroid) to supply my body with the essential thyroid hormones. Blood tests are required every 4-6 months to make sure my thyroid hormone is at an optimal level. One of the unfortunate side affects Synthroid may have is thinning the bones. They did a baseline bone density test, and in my early 40's I had the bones of a 19 year old, whereas after 18 years on Synthroid they say I now have Osteopenia....despite all the yoga, walking, dancing and hiking I participate in.

Symptoms:

- A lump or nodule on the side of the neck.
- A change in voice or persistent hoarseness.
- Problems swallowing.

- More rare forms of thyroid cancer might cause unexplained diarrhea (Coppa, 2015)

Benefits of Yoga	Precautions
Asana (yoga postures/poses) provide weight bearing exercise to decrease the bone-thinning affects of thyroid replacement therapy.	If a person has had a partial or full thyroidectomy, be <u>sure</u> to take your thyroid supplementation as directed by a trusted physician. It is important to follow up with the recommended blood tests monitoring thyroid levels to get an optimum dosage.
Meditation and Pranayama (breathing), and Ujaye breath can help calm anxiety.	Monitor your bone density, and supplement as needed. Get plenty of weight bearing exercise such as yoga, walking, dancing, hiking.
Certain poses such as those listed below help to stimulate and open the throat chakra/energy center.	Mind body awareness. Feel of your neck to make sure there are no lumps. Gently place your hand over the front of your neck and swallow.
Learn to express oneself. Some theories speculate people who are shy and have problems speaking, have a blocked throat chakra (energy center), which can lead to thyroid problems such as nodules and cancer. Methods to clear a blocked throat chakra can include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Singing or chanting. 2. Speak the truth with love. 3. Meditate on 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." Memorize this verse, and use it when you are feeling shy and bottled up. 	Some yoga poses to balance the throat chakra may be contraindicated for certain conditions such as shoulder stand, plow, supported headstand and upward facing wheel. A person should check each pose for precautions before attempting them, and be guided by an experienced yoga instructor. As with all yoga, listen to your body.
Don't neglect your minerals which are good for the thyroid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iodine – found in iodized salt, tuna, prunes, eggs. • Zinc – seeds, nuts, eggs, legumes. • Copper – dark green leafy veggies, dark chocolate (!), sesame seeds, cashews. • Selenium – Brazil nuts, fish, eggs, mushrooms, oatmeal, lentils, bananas. 	Monitor energy level, any hair loss, mood, agitation. A change could indicate imbalanced thyroid levels.

Mini Flow:

- Cat/Cow
- Cobra
- Camel
- Boat
- Fish
- Bridge
- Upward Facing Wheel*
- Supported headstand*
- Shoulder Stand*
- Plow*
- Legs-up-the-wall shavasana

* Use caution when attempting these more advanced poses, following the guidance of an experienced Yoga Instructor. Extra padding (such as folding a mat or towel) under the shoulders when doing Shoulder Stand and Plow is advisable to protect the neck. A few practitioners (ie: Wm. J. Broad, author of *The Science of Yoga*) believe yogis over 45 years should avoid shoulder stand and plow.

References:

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