

Prevention

5 Ways to Naturally Regulate Your Thyroid

By: Amber Brenza



If you've been keeping up with our thyroid content (and we know you have), you'll recall that the small gland in your neck does a whole lot of work with very little reward—until it starts malfunctioning. Thyroid symptoms can screw with your weight, body temperature, emotions, and it can even do some pretty weird stuff to your eyes. And while you should definitely see your doc if you suspect that butterfly-shaped powerhouse is malfunctioning, there are steps you can take to make sure it keeps running smoothly. Here are 5 ways to regulate your thyroid, naturally. (The Power Nutrient Solution is the first-ever plan that tackles the root cause of virtually every major ailment and health condition today.)

Don't go overboard on the kale.

Yes, kale is magical—there's no doubt about its superfood powers and overall deliciousness. But if you're chowing down on the green stuff day in and day out, your thyroid could suffer.



"They're in a class of vegetables (cruciferous ones) that contain goitrogens, which suppress thyroid function," says Gabrielle Francis, ND, of The Herban Alchemist. And it's not only kale—broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and cabbage are all in the cruciferous veggies fam. And if you're eating these veggies in their raw form (like the ever-popular kale smoothie) you're getting the most goitrogens they can offer. You can remedy that by a quick sauté or steam, but Francis suggests adding a little seaweed to your morning drink. "Goitrogens can inhibit the body's uptake of iodine, so adding extra seaweed can increase iodine levels," Francis says.

Treat yourself—in moderation.

Sugar, alcohol, caffeine—all delicious indulgences; all serious thyroid offenders. This trio can drastically raise your cortisol (the stress hormone) levels, which can disrupt the conversion of thyroid hormones to make them useful to the body. So when cortisol levels are raised, thyroid function is suppressed, suggests Francis. If you absolutely have to have something caffeinated or alcoholic, up your protein intake. Animal products (your typical meat, eggs, cheese, etc.) contain the amino acid, tyrosine, which aids in the production of thyroid hormones. Adding foods that are high in selenium, like nuts and seeds, can also boost your thyroid functioning, Francis says.

Invest in a water filter already.

Not just because it makes your H₂O taste better, but because the stuff that comes from your sink probably contains chlorine or fluoride (or both)—which can also disrupt the thyroid by interfering with its ability to cozy up with the iodine it needs to produce hormones. Luckily, there's an easy fix: Get a carbon block filter.

"Carbon block filters will drastically reduce the amount of chlorine and fluoride in your water," Francis says. And if you're hopping on the reduced-fluoride train, opt for natural, fluoride-free toothpaste like Tom's of Maine (\$6.50, amazon.com).

Get friendly with your yoga mat.



It's not all about the foods you (shouldn't) eat or the water you (shouldn't) drink—there are ways to move your body to stimulate thyroid production—like the cat-cow pose in yoga, suggests Francis. "Yoga poses that are known to help support and stimulate thyroid function are poses where you're bending your neck forward and then opening up and tilting it back," Francis says. Simply flexing and contracting your neck region (because that's where the thyroid is, remember?) can stimulate blood flow around the thyroid gland.

Don't fear the needles.

Acupuncture's not for everyone—the thought of a stranger sticking tiny pins into your body is enough to send many running for the hills. But if you're worried about your thyroid function, it may be time to give the ancient practice a try. "Acupuncture helps the circulation of blood and nutrients in the area where you're putting the needles, so if you put needles around the thyroid, you'll stimulate that area," Francis says. (Check out what acupuncture can do to your body.) But acupuncture is all about pressure points on part of the body that can make changes in another—so other pressure points that can aid in thyroid function include Lung 7 (a spot on the inside of your wrist below your thumb) and Large Intestine 4 (the soft spot between your thumb and your pointer finger).