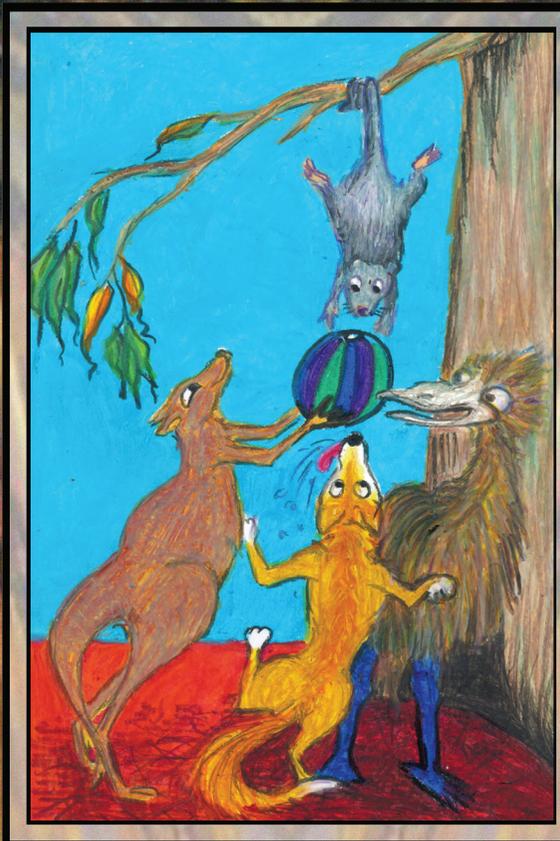


Things that may be helpful

Hashimoto's thyroiditis can be well managed by medication, but it is useful to:

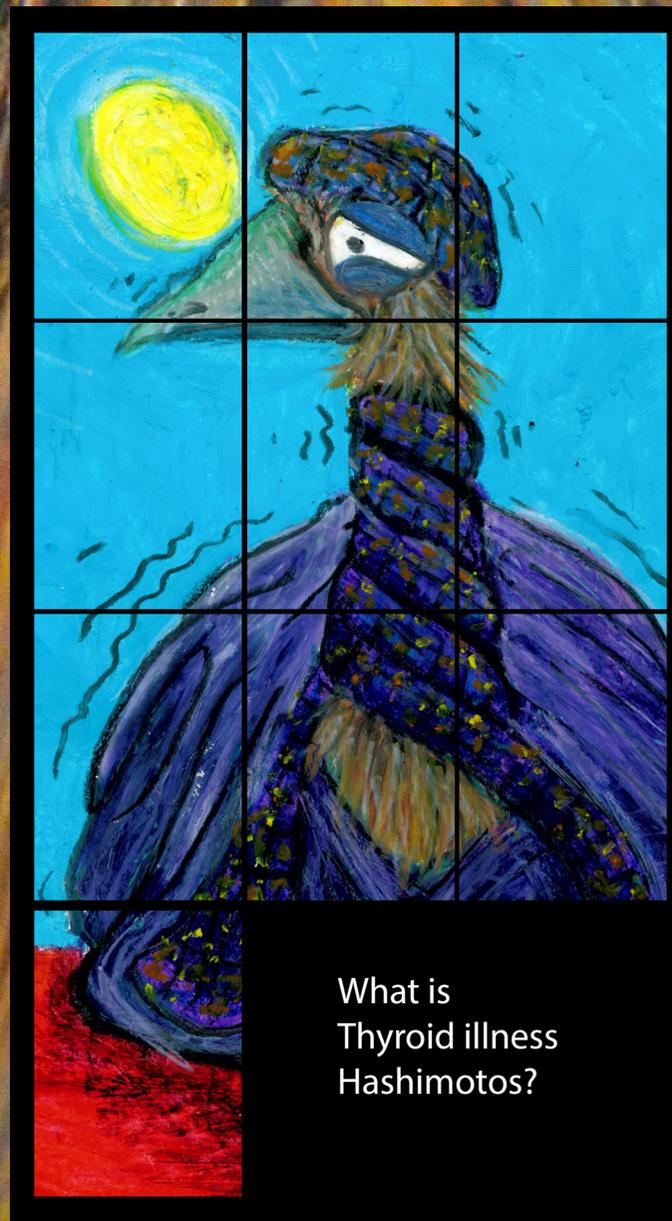
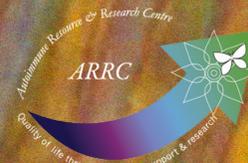
- ➡ Learn as much as you can about your illness.
- ➡ Always take the drugs prescribed by your doctor.
- ➡ Monitor your own progress and get regular medical checks to make sure your treatment is working properly as your medication dosage will vary with age.
- ➡ Remember, tiredness is common when your thyroid hormone levels are too low so resting is good. Pay attention to your body and slow down especially when you are not feeling well.
- ➡ Remember, overactivity, restlessness and a short attention span can occur if your thyroid hormone levels are too high, so see your doctor if this happens.
- ➡ Be careful in the sun and use sun protection measures of sunscreen, hats and sunglasses.
- ➡ Your diet should include a variety of foods. Don't eat too many foods that contain high levels of sugars, salt and fats.
- ➡ Drink adequate fluids, in particular water.



WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Autoimmune Resource & Research Centre
 Telephone: 02 49214095
 email: arrc@autoimmune.org.au
 web: www.autoimmune.org.au

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What is
 Thyroid illness
 Hashimotos?

THE THYROID GLAND

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland at the front of the neck. It makes and releases thyroid hormone which is a chemical that affects every cell in the body and controls many of the body's functions. When too little thyroid hormone is made by your body, this is called hypothyroidism. Too much thyroid hormone made by the body is called hyperthyroidism.

What is Hashimoto's Thyroiditis?

Hashimoto's thyroiditis is a common cause of hypothyroidism in people including children and young adults. Here, too little thyroid hormone is produced for the body to grow and function properly. Hashimoto's thyroiditis is a chronic illness which means that you will have this illness for life; however, it is an illness that can be managed very well so that you enjoy a full life.

What causes it?

Our body uses the immune system to protect itself from harmful things such as bacteria and viruses (bugs). We are not sure why some people have an immune system that does not work properly but we do know that when some people get sick it is caused by the system being overactive and causing harm to itself. This is called autoimmune illness. In Hashimoto's thyroiditis, the body's own immune system attacks the thyroid gland and upsets the normal production of thyroid hormone. The illness can start at any age and develops slowly.

If you have a family member with this condition you may be even more likely to get it because of your genetics. There is nothing you could have done to stop yourself getting the illness. We also know that you cannot catch the illness from other people.



Decreased energy

Tiredness & fatigue

Neck swelling

Feeling the cold

Weight gain

Dry itchy skin

Constipation

Poor concentration



What are the signs and symptoms?

As the thyroid gland makes less and less thyroid hormone, symptoms become more obvious, but this usually happens slowly. Symptoms may include:

- ➔ Unexpected decreasing growth rate.
- ➔ A swelling of the neck known as 'goitre'
- ➔ Unusual tiredness and fatigue.
- ➔ Dry itchy skin.
- ➔ Feeling the cold weather more than usual.
- ➔ Weight gain.
- ➔ Poor concentration.
- ➔ Decreased energy.
- ➔ Constipation.



How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will take a medical history and from this decide what tests should be done. Hashimoto's can be diagnosed through simple blood tests.

How is it treated?

Thyroid hormone replacement therapy is the main treatment. It is simple, with a pill taken once a day to replace the hormone that your body is no longer making. The dose that you will need to take depends on your age, as your need for thyroid hormone changes during your life.

Signs and symptoms should disappear with treatment. Your doctor will order blood tests regularly to make sure that normal hormone levels are maintained and you are feeling well. You will need to continue treatment for the rest of your life.

