

## Judy: It's not my fault!

By Judy Edgar

The phone rang. It was 6 pm and we were just about to sit down to dinner. It was my doctor! I had been to her office that morning complaining that my hands were so cold I was unable to touch my own body. It was like they were constantly in a freezer. I went to have my blood work done right from my appointment and here was my doctor calling me just a few hours later. "Your blood test shows you have a hypoactive thyroid and you need to go on medication immediately!" I hung up the phone and started to cry. I knew that one symptom of this disease was the inability to lose weight. This was why no matter how little I ate or how much I exercised I couldn't lose any weight. It's not my fault!

This was 1987 and I was 36 years old. I went on levothyroxine and have been on it since then. As time went by I started to ask a lot of questions. Before being diagnosed, I had been scheduled to have stomach bypass surgery because I couldn't lose weight. Fortunately I got scared and backed out. One year before my diagnosis I had miscarried twins. After my diagnosis I learned it was difficult to get pregnant and maintain a pregnancy if you have thyroid disease. I also learned that some symptoms of a hypoactive thyroid disease were brain fog, fatigue, restless leg syndrome, constipation, back problems and depression. I had all of these and had just accepted this as part of life.

In 2009 I started my own business, a Curves for Women franchise. I met so many women who had hypoactive thyroids. I also met women who suffered many of the symptoms but went undiagnosed. I continued to study more and learned that the medical profession only diagnosed someone having a hypoactive thyroid if one's TSH levels are above the normal range of 1-5. I learned that there hadn't been any updates on how thyroid disease was diagnosed and treated since 1970 and there has been little research done in spite of the growing numbers of people (mostly women) suffering.

I delved into more research once my daughter started to show signs of a problem with her thyroid. She suffered from severe depression with suicidal thoughts, gained weight, was cold all the time, had brain fog and had difficulty making it through a day of work.

One day I had an epiphany! Maybe I had been dealing with thyroid disease since I was 19 months old when I had a tonsillectomy. Up until I had my tonsils removed, my mother

told me I had been a very tiny baby. After my tonsils had been removed I became a chubby child and when I was 8 years old I weighed 98 pounds and the doctor put me on a diet. I was slow and clumsy and I felt I was a big disappointment. As a teenager I went to weight watchers and tried many other diets. I got married and at my wedding weighed 170 lbs. which is probably the least I ever weighed in my adult life.



When I was 16 I developed back problems and by the time I was 23 the pain was severe and I was diagnosed with a ruptured disc which was surgically removed. I now know that thyroid disease can cause back problems (my daughter suffers from low back issues). As a result of this surgery I developed scar tissue which impinged my sciatica nerve resulting in permanent nerve damage and drop foot.

Although I have suffered I am grateful because my problems have led me to research and my daughter returned to school to become a holistic nutritionist. Since becoming an RHN one of her main specialties has been researching thyroid disease. Between the two of us we have learned so much that we didn't know before and that the medical profession does not accept as it hasn't been scientifically proven and they are working with old science. My belief is that the pharmaceutical industry is not interested in looking for alternatives as Levothyroxine was the most commonly prescribed medication in the United States as of 2016, with more than **114 million** prescriptions. There is too much money being made from this drug to try to find alternatives.

I have changed my diet and eat a mostly paleo diet that does seem to help. I also take zinc and selenium supplements. Recently I asked my doctor to include checking my T4 and T3 levels when he sent me to check my TSH. He didn't think it was necessary but appeased me.

I am grateful that the laboratories now give the opportunity to check our lab results online and I discovered that my T3 levels were very low and T4 levels were high. The active hormone is T3 and the thyroid converts T4 to T3. My results led me to believe that I wasn't doing the conversion very well. When I questioned my



doctor his response was that you can't depend on blood tests! But, what if the results are accurate? I checked with my pharmacist who told me that T3 drugs are available but she has been running her own pharmacy for over 6 years and has never received a prescription for T3. What you may not know is that our TSH may be good but if the message to the T4 hormones is not getting through to convert to T3 we are still suffering. Then I asked an endocrinologist about taking desiccated thyroid hormone and I was told it contained T3 and that wasn't necessary because T4 converts to T3 and I could end up with too much T3. So here I am dealing with fatigue and struggling with weight and know that without T3 my endocrine system is not functioning very well. I have discovered a supplement which supports the

conversion of T4 to T3 and have been taking it for a while. I do feel less fatigued and I showed it to my doctor. He read the ingredients, handed the bottle back to me and said "Let's agree to disagree"! So where does this leave the suffering thyroid patient? I hope by writing this and with an organization like the Thyroid Foundation of Canada we can lobby for more research. I believe that with the toxicity levels in our environment more and more people, especially women, are suffering from thyroid disease and what people need to know is that the thyroid is the master gland and controls our entire endocrine system causing autoimmune disorders. Let's do what we can to eradicate autoimmune disease.

## A Good Diet for Thyroid patients!

What is a good diet for those with Thyroid disease?

There are lots of ideas on the internet about the best diet for thyroid patients from foods that are high in iodine content to various vegetables, etc. After checking with a number of dieticians there is no one menu that is said to be best for us who have a thyroid condition. For those of us who have difficulty with weight gain there's the same answer. We are being told the best diet for anyone is to eat wisely, follow the Canada's Food Guide and now we have a new one published recently. If you haven't seen it, it would be good to take some time to review it. A sample of this is shown below.

<p><b>Canada's food guide</b></p>	<p><b>What's in Canada's new Food Guide?</b></p>	
<p>Read more at: <a href="https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-food-choices/">https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-food-choices/</a></p>		

