

## January Is **THYROID AWARENESS** Month

While many people are thinking of New Year's resolutions in January, there's also another occasion to consider. Thyroid Awareness Month is organized by the American Thyroid Association with the goal of spreading awareness about thyroid health. More than half of people in the U.S. who suffer from a thyroid disorder have not been diagnosed, so Thyroid Awareness Month is particularly important.

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland in the front of the neck that creates hormones used throughout the body. They are used to help organs like the heart and brain work properly, as well as regulate body temperature. Approximately 20 million Americans have some form of thyroid disease, and women are five to eight times more likely than men to have thyroid problems.

### **COMMON THYROID DISORDERS INCLUDE:**

- **Hyperthyroidism**, which results in the thyroid producing an excess amount of hormones
- **Hypothyroidism**, which results in the thyroid producing an insufficient amount of hormones
- **Thyroid nodules**, which are lumps in the thyroid gland that can cause difficulties breathing or swallowing, as well as hormone overproduction

The American Thyroid Association strives to serve as an educational resource for the public by supporting thyroid research and promoting the prevention, treatment and cure of thyroid-related diseases and thyroid cancer.

Awareness is a key element to helping people with thyroid disorders recognize their symptoms, which will empower them to talk to their physicians about resting and treatment.

**To schedule a consultation with the Carolina ENT team to learn more about thyroid health and discuss any symptoms you're experiencing, call (828) 322-2183.**



## Know the Symptoms of **THYROID CONDITIONS**

**The thyroid is an endocrine gland near the collarbone that produces hormones that are used throughout the body. When it isn't functioning properly, it can cause symptoms ranging from depression and fatigue to difficulty swallowing and speaking.**

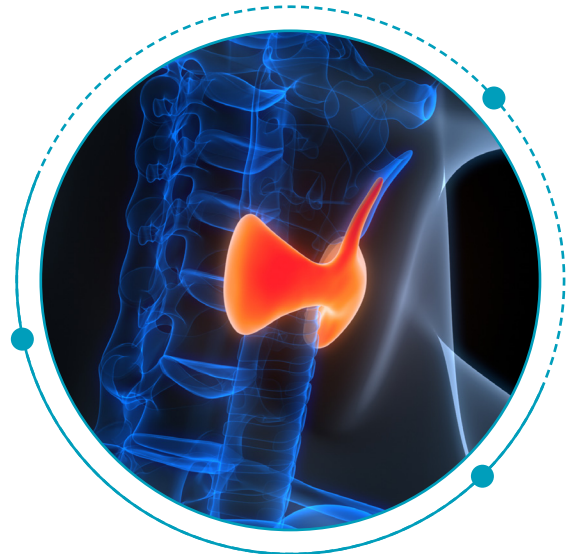
Hyperthyroidism causes the thyroid to produce an excess amount of hormones, while hypothyroidism causes the thyroid to produce an insufficient amount of hormones.

### Symptoms of hyperthyroidism include:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Fast heart rate
- Sensitivity to hot temperatures
- Clammy skin
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling anxious or irritable

### Symptoms of hypothyroidism include:

- Unexplained weight gain
- Fatigue
- Dry skin
- Hair loss
- Low mood



**Thyroid nodules are solid lumps or fluid-filled cysts that can cause difficulties breathing and swallowing, along with affecting thyroid hormone levels.** The majority of these nodules do not cause symptoms, though sometimes they can result in hyperthyroidism symptoms.

If you're experiencing symptoms of a thyroid disorder, Carolina ENT can help. Make an appointment with our team to get started with a personalized treatment plan so you can get back to your daily life.

**Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 to schedule a consultation with one of our expert providers.**

# How Are Thyroid Disorders Treated

Thyroid disorders can result in a variety of uncomfortable symptoms, from anxiety and trouble sleeping with hyperthyroidism to depression and fatigue with hypothyroidism. But these symptoms don't have to be a consistent part of your life. At Carolina ENT, our providers will determine which treatment will work best for you.

Hyperthyroidism results in the thyroid producing an excess amount of hormones, and hypothyroidism results in the thyroid producing an insufficient amount of hormones. The goal of treating these disorders is to return the hormone levels to a healthy range.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR HYPERTHYROIDISM INCLUDE:

- Antithyroid drugs, such as methimazole and propylthiouracil, that limit the thyroid's hormone production
- Beta-blockers, which do not affect the thyroid but manage certain symptoms like rapid heart rate
- Thyroidectomy, or a removal of the thyroid

Our team will help you feel confident about whichever treatment option you move forward with. If a thyroidectomy is recommended, you'll need to take thyroid replacement medication for the rest of your life.

Thyroid replacement medication is also used to treat hypothyroidism, since it will help to increase your hormone levels.

If you're dealing with a thyroid disorder, you don't have to navigate this time on your own. The team at Carolina ENT will partner with you to determine which treatment will work best for you so you can get back to the activities that mean the most to you.

**Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183**  
to schedule a consultation with one of our caring  
and expert physicians.



# LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT THYROID CANCER

The American Cancer Society estimated that there have been about **44,020** new cases of thyroid cancer diagnosed in the U.S. during 2024. Since 2014, diagnosis rates have declined by about **2%** annually.

Though thyroid cancer may not cause symptoms at first, but as it grows, it may lead to:

- A lump on your neck
- Changes to your voice
- Difficulty swallowing
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Pain or discomfort in your neck or throat

**If you're concerned about thyroid cancer, the team at Carolina ENT will support you on your journey through treatment. You won't have to navigate this time alone.**

Types of Thyroid Cancer

- **Papillary Thyroid Cancer:** This is the most common type of thyroid cancer and most frequently affects people ages 30 to 50. It is typically small and responds well to treatment, even if the cancer cells spread to the lymph nodes in the neck.
- **Follicular Thyroid Cancer:** This thyroid cancer is much less common and typically affects those 50 and older. Follicular thyroid cancer most often spreads to the lungs and bones.
- **Hurthle Cell Thyroid Cancer:** This cancer was once considered a type of follicular thyroid cancer but was differentiated because its cells behave differently. It is aggressive and can spread to the neck and other parts of the body.
- **Anaplastic Thyroid Cancer:** This type of cancer is rare, fast-growing and often difficult to treat, though treatments can slow its progression. It typically occurs in people older than 60.
- **Medullary Thyroid Cancer:** This rare type of thyroid cancer originates in thyroid cells that produce the hormone calcitonin.

Risk factors for thyroid cancer include being born female, radiation exposure and genetic syndromes such as familial medullary thyroid cancer, multiple endocrine neoplasia, Cowden syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis.

## What Treatments Are Available?

For patients diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancers, immediate treatment may not be necessary. These specific cancers often present a low risk of growth or spreading. Instead of immediate surgical intervention or other treatments, an active surveillance approach might be more suitable. This involves regular check-ups and monitoring of the cancer, which may include blood tests and ultrasound exams of your neck once or twice a year.

If thyroid cancer treatment is required, one of the most common methods is surgery, which can involve either partial or complete removal of the thyroid. The specific surgical procedure recommended by your health care team depends on factors such as your type of thyroid cancer, its size and whether the cancer has spread beyond the thyroid to the lymph nodes.

Surgical options could include:

- **Thyroidectomy:** Complete or near-complete removal of the thyroid
- **Thyroid Lobectomy:** Removal of a portion of the thyroid
- **Lymph Node Dissection:** Removal of lymph nodes in the neck

For more aggressive forms of cancer, additional treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation or targeted drug therapy may be recommended. Our team will help you understand what to expect during these treatments and support you during the process.

**Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 to schedule a consultation with one of our compassionate providers to learn more about thyroid health.**



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