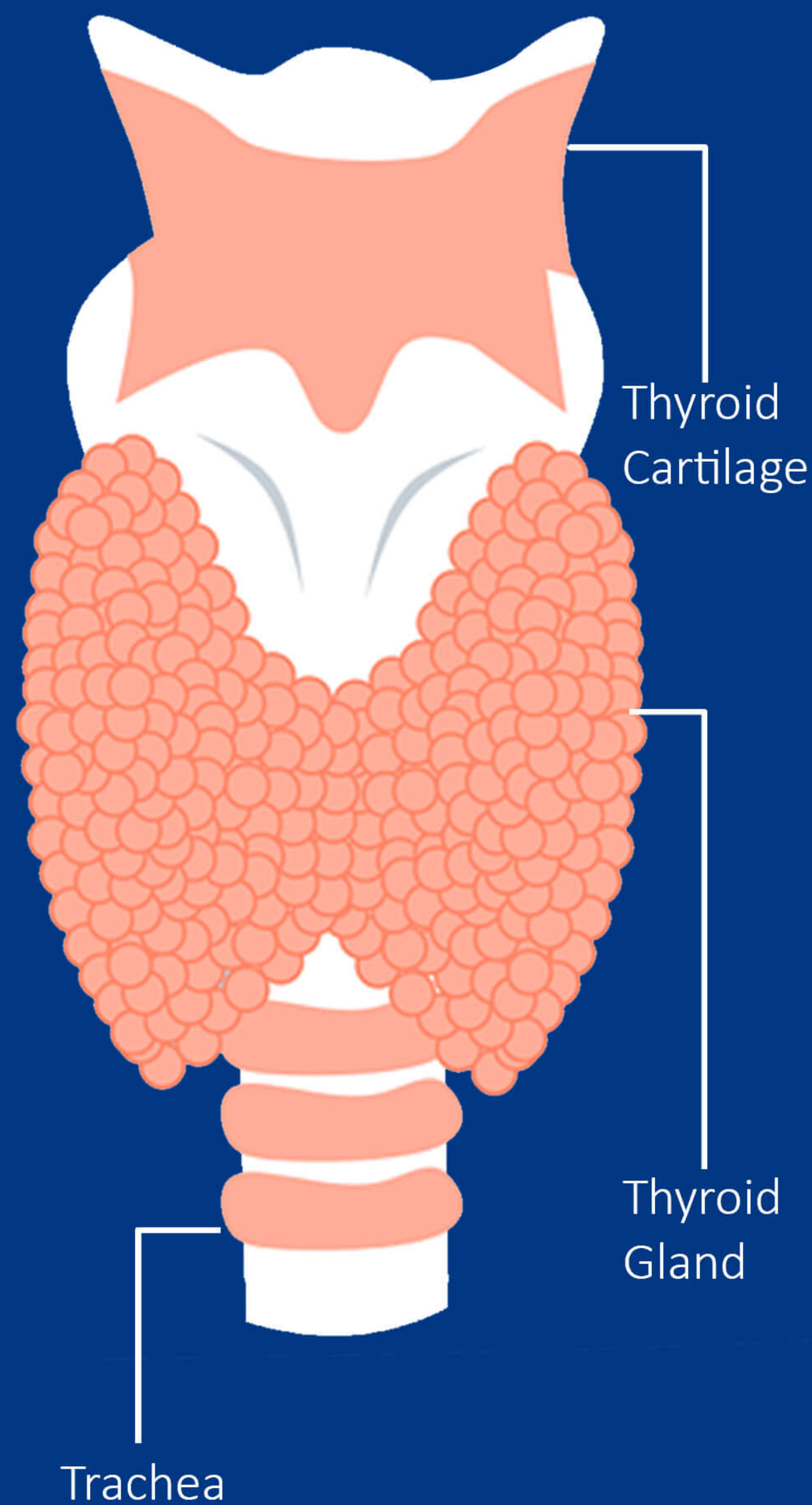


THYROID
AWARENESS MONTH

YOUR THYROID & HOW IT WORKS

The thyroid gland (also called simply the thyroid) is located in front of the neck. It looks sort of like a butterfly with one wing on each side of the neck. The thyroid is important in many ways for keeping your body healthy. It sends out certain chemicals (hormones) that help control many activities in the body, such as breathing and pumping blood. The thyroid helps children's bodies develop as they grow up, including getting taller and putting on muscle. It helps control weight and is also involved in other functions.

For more information please consult your primary care physician.



THYROID DIAGRAM

Hyperthyroidism vs. Hypothyroidism



Hyperthyroidism, also known as overactive thyroid, occurs when the thyroid gland overproduces thyroid hormones, thus accelerating the body's natural functions. In contrast, hypothyroidism is the result of an underactive thyroid that is not secreting enough thyroid hormones, which leads to the slowing-down of natural functions.

Hypothyroidism is much more common than hyperthyroidism and is usually diagnosed by a blood test measuring the level of TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone) in the body.

Overactive vs. Underactive Thyroid Symptoms

Hyperthyroidism (Overactive Thyroid)

- Rapid weight loss
- Feeling unnaturally uncomfortable in the heat
- Increased or irregular heart rate
- Excessive sweating
- Diarrhea
- Tremors
- In menstruating women, hypomenorrhea or amenorrhea

Hypothyroidism (Underactive Thyroid)

- Rapid weight gain, despite (sometimes) lack of appetite
- Feeling cold and having cool extremities (hands, feet)
- Slow heart rate
- Decreased sweating
- Dry skin and hair
- Facial swelling or other swelling, such as of the limbs
- Constipation
- In menstruating women, menorrhagia and irregular periods
- Existing diagnosis of an autoimmune disease, such as diabetes mellitus or celiac disease



What Causes Thyroid Cancer?

Scientists are not completely sure about what causes thyroid cancer, but some things that may make getting thyroid cancer more likely include —

- Getting too much radiation around the neck area, especially when you are young.
- Having certain genetic conditions inherited from parents.

What Are the Symptoms of Thyroid Cancer?

- A lump or swelling on the side of the neck is the most common symptom.
- Having trouble breathing.
- Having trouble swallowing.
- Having a hoarse voice.

How Can I Reduce My Risk for Thyroid Cancer?

To lower the risk of thyroid cancer, avoid unnecessary exposure to radiation, including radiation from medical imaging procedures, especially in young children, and especially around the head and neck.