

# Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH)

## General Information

Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) is a hormone made by the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland is a peanut-shaped gland in the brain that makes hormones that affect the growth and functions of other glands in the body. TSH stimulates the thyroid make thyroid hormones.

Your thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located just below your Adam's apple. It is in front of and to the sides of your trachea, or windpipe. Your thyroid absorbs iodine from your body. It uses the iodine to produce hormones that regulate how your body uses energy (your metabolism).

A thyroid gland releases hormones that control how much energy you have and how fast your body uses this energy.

## TSH Screening Test

The TSH screening test is a test that measures the amount of the TSH hormone in the blood. This test will show any "abnormal" thyroid function.

Any "abnormal" TSH level may mean that the regulation of the thyroid hormone is out of control, which usually happens because of hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) or hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid).

- Hypothyroidism occurs when your thyroid does not produce enough hormones to correctly regulate the rate your body uses

energy. Signs and symptoms may include:

- fatigue
  - depression
  - forgetfulness
  - feeling cold
  - dry skin and hair
  - increased menstrual flow
  - weight gain
  - constipation.
- Hyperthyroidism occurs when your thyroid produces too much thyroid hormone. This forces your body to use more energy than it should. Some possible signs and symptoms are:
    - nervousness and irritability
    - fatigue
    - muscle weakness
    - tremors
    - rapid heart beat
    - warm skin, feeling hot
    - increased perspiration
    - more frequent bowel movements
    - vision problems
    - decreased menstrual flow
    - thinning hair
    - weight loss.