

Living With Hypothyroidism: Your Levothyroxine Guide

Medical-Surgical · Endocrine (Diabetes, Thyroid)

Hypothyroidism means your thyroid gland is slow and makes too little thyroid hormone. Levothyroxine replaces that hormone so your body works at its normal speed.

Take it the right way

- Take it once a day, at the same time, on an empty stomach.
- Swallow it with a full glass of water.
- **Wait 30 to 60 minutes before you eat breakfast or drink coffee.**
- Keep the bottle by your bed so you remember.
- Most people take it for life. Do not stop it on your own.

Keep it apart from other pills

- Take calcium, iron, antacids (Tums, Maalox), and vitamins with minerals at least 4 hours apart from your thyroid pill.
- Keep fiber, soy, and coffee about the same each day.
- Tell every provider and pharmacist that you take it.

Get your blood tests

- A TSH blood test shows if your dose is right.
- You need a test 6 to 8 weeks after each dose change.
- Your next test: _____.
- Ask before you switch to a different maker of your pill.

Give it time

- You will feel better slowly, over a few weeks.
- Too much medicine: fast heartbeat, nervousness, trouble sleeping, feeling hot, or weight loss.
- Too little medicine: tiredness, feeling cold, constipation, or weight gain.
- Tell your provider if you are pregnant or plan to be.

Call your provider today if you have

- A fast heartbeat, shakiness, trouble sleeping, or feeling too hot
- Tiredness, feeling cold, or constipation that does not improve
- Pregnancy or plans to become pregnant

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Chest pain or pressure
- Extreme sleepiness, confusion, or trouble waking up
- Very slow breathing with a cold body
- A racing, uneven heartbeat with fainting

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/hypothyroidism-levothyroxine/patient

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