

## **RCP: Thyroxine is the only treatment for primary hypothyroidism**

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New guidelines on the diagnosis and management of primary hypothyroidism state that thyroxine is the only treatment that should be given for this condition, which is caused by underactivity of the thyroid gland. Symptoms include tiredness, muscle cramps and sensitivity to cold.

The guidelines also state that the only validated method of testing thyroid function is on blood, which must include serum TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) and a measure of free thyroxine (T4).

Patients, doctors and other health professionals are worried that people are being wrongly diagnosed and treated, due to the amount of unvalidated diagnostic tests and 'natural' treatments which are being offered by a variety of private individuals and companies. Wrong diagnoses and treatments can be dangerous, either because the wrong treatment can cause serious side effects, or the true cause of symptoms can be left undiagnosed and untreated.

The guidelines were produced by:

- The Royal College of Physicians, in particular its Patient and Carer Network and the Joint Specialty Committee for Endocrinology & Diabetes
- The Association for Clinical Biochemistry
- The Society for Endocrinology
- The British Thyroid Association
- The British Thyroid Foundation Patient Support Group
- The British Society of Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes

And are endorsed by The Royal College of General Practitioners

Professor David Scott, Chairman of the Guideline Development Group, said: ""I am delighted that the statement provides real clarity for patients and health professionals in this important clinical area."

Professor Jayne Franklin, President of the British Thyroid Association, said: "This statement, supported by a large number of patient and professional groups, gives a clear indication to patients and their doctors how their thyroid condition may be best diagnosed and treated. The British Thyroid Association welcomes it as a way of ensuring that patients are provided with the highest standard of care."

Notes to Editors

The guidelines are available free to download from the RCP website here:

<http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/specialties/Endocrinology-Diabetes/Documents/Hypothyroidism%20Statement.pdf>

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