

A balanced lifestyle for preventing Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism is a common disease, which is closely related to the increase of blood thyroid hormone and sensitivity to adrenaline resulted from stress. The immune system produced specific antibodies that stimulate the thyroid gland to produce excessive thyroid hormones. Studies conducted by the Department of Medicine of HKU LKS Faculty of Medicine indicated that female were prone to have hyperthyroidism with an incidence of 2- 4%. The results also showed that most patients felt stressful on career, family and financial issues in 6 to 12 months prior to the onset of the disease.

There are many possible causes for hyperthyroidism, including autoimmune thyroid disease, inflammation of the thyroid gland, drugs for thyroid nodule/tumor that interfere with thyroid hormone production, pituitary gland disorders and excessive iodine intake. Its symptoms include enlargement of thyroid gland, emergence of nodules/lumps, obvious mental and physical symptoms involving the digestive, nervous, reproductive and circulatory systems.

Its treatments include anti-thyroid medication, radioactive iodine and surgery. Anti-thyroid medication is often taken for 12 months or longer. Some patients may have allergic reactions like reduction in white cell, sore throat and skin eruption. However, 50% of women and 70% of men may relapse after the treatment. Oral radioactive iodine can ablate a hyperactive gland, but may result in hypothyroidism in later years. Surgery can remove the whole or part of thyroid gland, but its complications include hypothyroidism and relapse of hyperthyroidism.

To help control the symptoms, hyperthyroid patients should maintain a relaxed lifestyle and avoid high iodine intake, such as kelp, seaweed and iodized salt.