The Art and Science of Balancing the Thyroid

Dr. Beverly Goode-Kanawati takes such a special interest in thyroid balance issues that she has literally written the book on it! Her upcoming thyroid book not only demystifies root causes of disease and malfunction, it illustrates the many interdependencies between the thyroid and nearly every other system in the body—and her multi-faceted approach to restoring balance.

She describes her own evolution in thinking, rooted in years of private practice, in this excerpt from the forward to her upcoming book:

Simply put, many of the problems that bring patients to see me are the result of problems with the thyroid. In fact, I would describe it as a thyroid epidemic. Often patients describe symptoms that other doctors either can’t diagnose or have misdiagnosed: things like depression, obesity, nervousness, rashes, autoimmune disease, and more. Diagnosing and treating thyroid issues correctly can resolve a whole host of seemingly unrelated problems and disorders.

What is absolutely crucial in my work is the discovery that the causes for these thyroid problems are also factors that contribute to autoimmune diseases, infertility, cancer, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses. By treating these causes, not only was I stabilizing issues surrounding the thyroid but also helping to prevent other diseases from occurring.

Together with her team of integrative practitioners, Dr. Goode-Kanawati helps to treat thyroid imbalances every day. Just a small sample of cases illustrates the wide-ranging impact of thyroid disequilibrium.

WHEN ILLNESS THROWS OFF THYROID FUNCTION

Sad and frustrated, Karen* said to Dr. Goode-Kanawati: “I have been sick for 12 years, I have seen over 15 doctors and if you do not help me, I am giving up on doctors!” Karen had undergone many approaches and treatments for her chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, but still hadn’t regained her quality of life.

A thyroid check revealed that both the pituitary gland and thyroid gland were functioning properly. That means her brain was giving the right instructions and her thyroid gland was able to produce T4, the main thyroid hormone in the body.

But in Karen’s case, she was not converting T4 into T3, the active form of thyroid hormone. This poor conversion of T4 to T3 is a common problem in patients with fatigue, stress, diabetes, or carbohydrate intolerance, or in any chronic debilitating disease. It is so common that nearly every hospital patient or severely ill individual will show at least temporary low levels of T3.

We switched Karen to a very low dose of long-acting T3 and as her health improved, we were able to reduce her dosage and wean her off the medication altogether. In cases like Karen’s, the goal is to stabilize the system. While she did not suffer from thyroid disease itself, her body needed temporary thyroid support to regain overall equilibrium.

THYROID DISEASE CAN TRIGGER WIDESPREAD IMBALANCES

“Valerie,” a 51-year-old retired teacher who came to see Dr. Goode-Kanawati, said she hoped it would be worth the two-hour drive. Prior to the past two years, she had always been healthy and energetic. Now she faced a bewildering variety of daily symptoms including muscle aches, headaches, ringing and pounding in her ears, fatigue, burning sensations in her stomach, sinus congestion, brain fog, and a feeling of overall apathy. Life had become an endurance test for Valerie.

The detective work involved in these cases reveals the balance between art and science needed to “solve” thyroid puzzles. The art of listening—and of knowing the right questions to ask—yields important clues to the physical, mental, and emotional issues that may underlie the surface symptoms. And the science of detailed diagnostic work is invaluable in fine-tuning each individual’s system to work at the optimal level—restoring not just health, but the energy and joy it brings.

To herald the upcoming 2020 publication of Dr. Goode Kanawati’s book, Beverly Medical Center will be offering a series of events, including lectures on thyroid health, workshops on nutritional support for the thyroid, pre-readings of the book, and more! For the latest news and event information, please email nutrition@beverlymedicalcenter.com to be added to the early access mailing list.