

## THYROID SCREEN (TSH)

The Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone test, or TSH, is a blood test used to detect problems affecting the thyroid gland. An under-active thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight gain, tiredness, dry skin, constipation, a feeling of being too cold, or frequent menstrual periods. An overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight loss, rapid heart rate, nervousness, diarrhea, a feeling of being too hot, or irregular menstrual periods. According to the National Women's Health Information Center, about 1 in 8 American women will develop a thyroid disorder. An under-active thyroid (hypothyroidism) is more common in women than men and often hits hardest during pregnancy, midlife, and older age.

### What should I do with my results?

It is always recommended that you meet with a doctor to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your doctor will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, he or she will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

**If any of your results were abnormal or out-of-range:** If your result was abnormally high it may indicate an under-active thyroid gland. An abnormally low TSH result can indicate an overactive thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism) or excessive amounts of thyroid hormone medication in those who are being treated for an under-active (or removed) thyroid gland. Whether high or low, an abnormal TSH indicates an excess or deficiency in the amount of thyroid hormone available to the body, but it does not indicate the reason. As with any abnormal results, it's important that you discuss their implications with your physician.

**If your results were within normal range:** If your results are within the normal TSH range, you should consult with your physician about the necessity for further testing. Your physician is best suited to advise you on a timetable for all screening tests.