

The Neck's Generation

Thyroid Genealogy



The **thyroid gland** is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the base of the neck just below the Adam's apple. Although relatively small, the thyroid gland influences the function of many of the body's most important organs, including the heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin. Ensuring that the thyroid gland is healthy and functioning properly is important to the body's overall well-being.

Thyroid disease affects an estimated 13 million Americans of all ages, yet more than half remain undiagnosed. Undiagnosed thyroid disease can lead to elevated cholesterol levels and subsequent heart disease, infertility, and osteoporosis. Research also shows that there is a strong genetic link between thyroid disease and other autoimmune diseases including certain types of diabetes, anemia and arthritis. That's why the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) has launched a new public education initiative called *The Neck's Generation*. The campaign aims to educate Americans about the genetic links associated with thyroid disease, and encourage them to investigate their family health history to uncover any at-risk conditions.

Because many of thyroid disease's symptoms are vague, AACE is working to increase awareness of the flagship signs such as fatigue, depression, forgetfulness, changes in growth or cognitive function, or changes in hair, skin and nails. As a first step in identifying an underlying thyroid problem, AACE recommends that patients experiencing these symptoms conduct a simple thyroid self-exam.

Take the Neck Check™ to help determine whether or not you have an enlarged thyroid gland, which may require further examination by an endocrinologist and testing with the highly sensitive TSH test.

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How to take the Thyroid "Neck Check™"

Five Easy Steps That could Save Your Life

All you will need is:
• a glass of water
• a handheld mirror



1 Hold the mirror in your hand, focusing on the area of your neck just below the Adam's apple and immediately above the collarbone. Your thyroid gland is located in this area of your neck.

2 While focusing on this area in the mirror, tip your head back.

3 Take a drink of water and swallow.

4 As you swallow, look at your neck. Check for any bulges or protrusions in this area when you swallow. Reminder: don't confuse the Adam's apple with the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is located further down on your neck, closer to the collarbone. You may want to repeat this process several times.



5 If you do see any bulges or protrusions in this area, see your physician. You may have an enlarged thyroid gland or a thyroid nodule and should be checked to determine whether cancer is present or if treatment for thyroid disease is needed.



American Association of
Clinical Endocrinologists

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