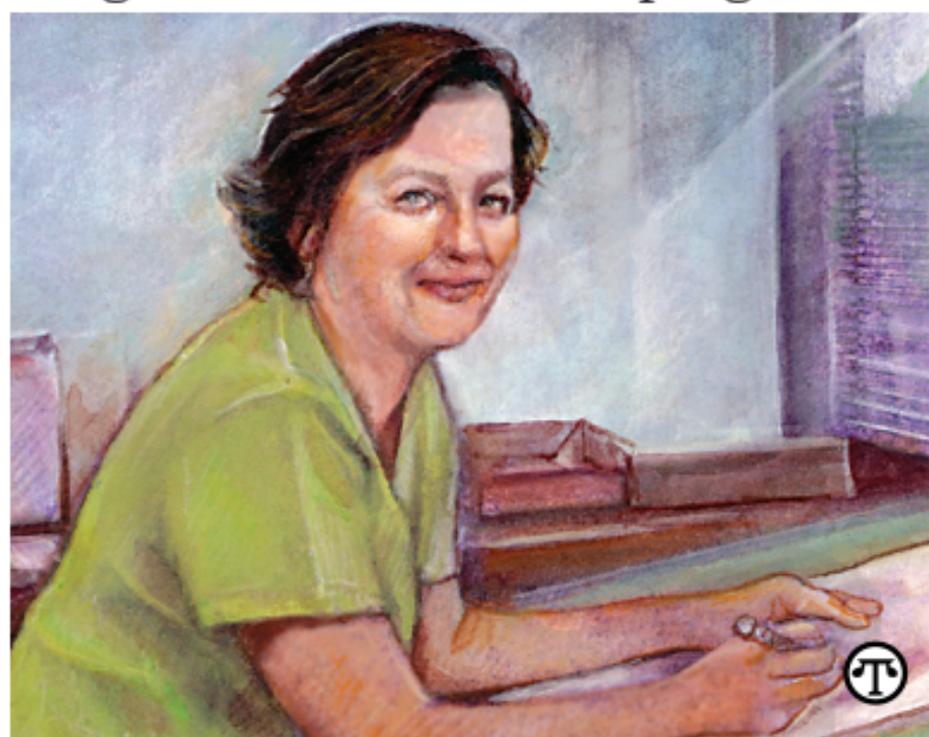


Health Awareness



Thyroid Problems Can Affect Your Health

(NAPSA)—The thyroid, a 2-inch-long gland in the front of the neck, makes hormones that affect nearly every organ in the body. When the thyroid doesn't work properly, health problems can result, including weight fluctuation, skin disorders, depression, fatigue and trouble sleeping.



Nearly 27 million Americans have thyroid problems—among the most common are underactive and overactive thyroid. Underactive thyroid is when the thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone, which in turn slows many of the body's functions. This condition often occurs after pregnancy. Overactive thyroid is when the thyroid gland makes too much thyroid hormone, causing symptoms such as hand tremors; a rapid, irregular heartbeat; and bone thinning. Thyroid problems are more common in women and older adults.

If you suspect a problem with your thyroid gland, your doctor can test the amount of thyroid hormone in your blood. Your treatment will depend on the cause and severity of your thyroid problem.

Visit the National Endocrine and Metabolic Diseases Information Service Web site at www.endocrine.niddk.nih.gov/info for free publications about thyroid problems.