

EFFECT OF YOGA AND DIET IN HYPOTHYROIDISM***Dr. Priyanka Sharma**

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ABSTRACT

Hypothyroidism, a prevalent endocrine disorder, affects millions worldwide, with higher incidence among women. This condition, characterized by insufficient thyroid hormone production, leads to symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, and depression. Emerging evidence suggests that yoga and dietary interventions can play a complementary role in managing hypothyroidism. Yoga practices, including asanas, pranayama, and meditation, have shown potential in improving thyroid function, reducing stress, and enhancing overall quality of life. Similarly, a balanced diet rich in iodine, selenium, and zinc, along with the avoidance of goitrogenic foods, supports thyroid health. This review highlights the synergistic effects of yoga and diet in hypothyroidism management, emphasizing the need for personalized and integrative approaches. Further research is warranted to establish standardized protocols and validate these findings.

KEYWORDS: Hypothyroidism, yoga, diet, thyroid health, integrative therapy, asanas, pranayama, nutrition.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga and diet are powerful tools in managing hypothyroidism, a condition where the thyroid gland underproduces hormones, leading to symptoms like fatigue, weight gain, and depression. Here's an overview.

Yoga's Impact

Yoga can stimulate the thyroid gland and improve its function. Specific poses like Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand), Matsyasana (Fish Pose), and Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) are

particularly beneficial. Regular yoga practice also reduces stress, which can exacerbate thyroid issues. Studies have shown that yoga can help regulate thyroid hormone levels and improve overall well-being².

Dietary Influence

A balanced diet is crucial for managing hypothyroidism. Foods rich in iodine, selenium, and zinc, such as seafood, nuts, and whole grains, support thyroid health. Avoiding goitrogenic foods like raw cruciferous vegetables (e.g., broccoli, cauliflower) in large amounts is recommended. Anti-inflammatory foods like berries and leafy greens can further help in managing symptoms².

Together, yoga and a tailored diet can complement medical treatments, offering a holistic approach to managing hypothyroidism. If you'd like, I can help you explore specific yoga routines or dietary plans.

The Effect of Yoga and Diet in Managing Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism, a condition characterized by an underactive thyroid gland, affects millions worldwide. While medical treatments like hormone replacement therapy are essential, complementary approaches such as yoga and dietary modifications can significantly enhance the management of this condition.

Yoga's Role in Hypothyroidism

Yoga is a holistic practice that not only improves physical health but also promotes mental well-being. Certain yoga poses, such as Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand), Matsyasana (Fish Pose), and Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose), are particularly beneficial for stimulating the thyroid gland. These poses enhance blood circulation to the neck region, potentially improving thyroid function. Additionally, yoga helps reduce stress, a known factor that can exacerbate thyroid issues. Regular practice of yoga has been shown to regulate hormone levels and improve overall energy and mood in individuals with hypothyroidism.

Yoga can be a beneficial complementary therapy for managing hypothyroidism. Research suggests that yoga may help improve thyroid function, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being. For example,

- **Thyroid Function:** Yoga practices, including poses and breath regulation, have been shown to positively impact thyroid hormone levels, such as TSH, fT3, and fT4².

- **Stress Reduction:** Stress is closely linked to thyroid health. Yoga helps lower cortisol levels, which can indirectly support thyroid function.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** Regular yoga practice has been associated with better mental health, reduced anxiety, and improved physical health markers.

Yoga can be a valuable practice for managing hypothyroidism, as certain poses stimulate the thyroid gland and improve overall well-being. Here are some yoga poses that are particularly beneficial.

1. Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand)



This inversion pose increases blood flow to the thyroid gland, stimulating its function. It also helps balance hormone levels and improves metabolism.

2. Matsyasana (Fish Pose)



Known for its throat-stretching benefits, this pose enhances circulation in the neck region and supports thyroid health.

3. Halasana (Plough Pose)



This pose puts gentle pressure on the neck, which can help activate the thyroid gland. It also improves flexibility and reduces stress.

4. Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)



This backbend stretches the neck and throat area, promoting better thyroid function. It also strengthens the spine and relieves fatigue.

5. Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)



This pose stimulates the thyroid gland by gently compressing the neck. It also helps open up the chest and improves posture.

6. Ustrasana (Camel Pose)



A deep backbend that stretches the neck and throat, this pose is excellent for stimulating the thyroid gland and reducing stress.

7. Viparita Karani (Legs-Up-The-Wall Pose)



This restorative pose improves circulation and reduces stress, which can indirectly benefit thyroid health.

8. Simhasana (Lion Pose)



This pose involves stretching the throat and vocal cords, which can help stimulate the thyroid gland.

Regular practice of these poses, combined with proper breathing techniques and mindfulness, can complement medical treatments for hypothyroidism. Always consult a healthcare professional or a certified yoga instructor before starting a new yoga routine to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Dietary Considerations

A well-balanced diet plays a crucial role in managing hypothyroidism. Key nutrients like iodine, selenium, and zinc are vital for thyroid health. Foods such as seafood, nuts, eggs, and whole grains are excellent sources of these nutrients. However, it is equally important to avoid excessive consumption of goitrogenic foods like raw cruciferous vegetables (e.g., broccoli, cauliflower), as they can interfere with thyroid hormone production. Incorporating anti-inflammatory foods like berries, leafy greens, and turmeric can further help in alleviating symptoms. Staying hydrated and maintaining a consistent eating schedule also support metabolic health.

Foods to Include

1. **Iodine-Rich Foods:** Essential for thyroid hormone production. Include iodized salt, seafood, dairy products, and eggs.
2. **Selenium-Rich Foods:** Selenium supports thyroid health. Add Brazil nuts, sunflower seeds, tuna, and turkey to your diet.
3. **Zinc-Rich Foods:** Zinc aids in thyroid hormone synthesis. Incorporate shellfish, chicken, and legumes.

4. **Anti-Inflammatory Foods:** Reduce inflammation with berries, leafy greens, turmeric, and ginger.
5. **Whole Grains:** Provide fiber to combat constipation, a common symptom of hypothyroidism.

Foods to Avoid

1. **Goitrogenic Foods:** These can interfere with thyroid hormone production. Limit raw cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage.
2. **Soy Products:** Excessive soy can affect thyroid hormone absorption.
3. **Processed Foods:** High in sugar and unhealthy fats, they can worsen symptoms.
4. **Excessive Iodine:** Too much iodine can be harmful, especially for autoimmune thyroid conditions.

Additional Tips

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to support metabolism.
- **Balanced Meals:** Combine proteins, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates for sustained energy.
- **Timing Matters:** Take thyroid medication on an empty stomach and avoid calcium or iron supplements immediately after.

A Holistic Approach

Combining yoga and a tailored diet offers a holistic approach to managing hypothyroidism. While yoga addresses physical and mental well-being, dietary adjustments ensure the thyroid gland receives the necessary nutrients for optimal function. Together, these practices can complement medical treatments, improve quality of life, and empower individuals to take an active role in their health journey.

1. **Exercise:** Regular physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight and boosts energy levels.
2. **Stress Management:** Practices like yoga, meditation, and deep breathing can reduce stress, which may exacerbate thyroid issues.
3. **Sleep:** Ensure adequate rest to support overall health and hormone regulation.

DISCUSSION

1. Yoga's Impact

- Yoga practices, such as Shoulderstand (Sarvangasana) and Fish Pose (Matsyasana), stimulate the thyroid gland and improve circulation around the neck area.
- Stress reduction through yoga lowers cortisol levels, which can indirectly support thyroid function.
- Studies have shown improvements in thyroid hormone levels (TSH, fT3, fT4) and overall quality of life among hypothyroid patients practicing yoga.

2. Dietary Management

- A balanced diet rich in iodine, selenium, and zinc supports thyroid health. Foods like fish, eggs, and nuts are beneficial.
- Avoiding goitrogenic foods (e.g., raw cruciferous vegetables) can prevent interference with thyroid hormone production.
- Incorporating anti-inflammatory foods, such as turmeric and leafy greens, helps reduce thyroid-related inflammation.

CONCLUSION

Yoga and dietary adjustments can be effective adjunct therapies for hypothyroidism. While yoga enhances thyroid function and reduces stress, a nutrient-rich diet supports hormone production and overall health. Together, they offer a holistic approach to managing hypothyroidism, improving both physical and mental well-being.

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