



Telephone Directory

Customer Service

(941) 748-4501 ext 6415 and ext 6417
(941) 741-2960

Employee Health Benefits
(941) 748-4501 ext 6403

Member Advocacy
(941) 748-4501 ext 6407, ext 6409, and ext 6411

Lifestyle Assistance and Modification Program (LAMP)
(941)741-2995

Diabetes/Nutrition Program
(941) 748-4501 ext 6410

Communications Coordinator
(941)748-4501 ext 3967

Fitness/Exercise Programs
(941)748-4501 ext 3979

Pharmacy Advocate
(941) 748-4501 ext 6406

Prescription Solutions
(800) 797-9791

Precertification
(941) 741-2963

January is Thyroid Awareness Month

Thyroid levels are like the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Having thyroid levels that are too high can lead to health problems, but so can thyroid levels that are too low. High thyroid levels can leave you feeling hyped up, shaky, and can cause hair loss and diarrhea. Low thyroid levels can cause you to feel sluggish and tired and to gain weight. These problems can be due to an overactive thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism) or an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism). Hyperthyroidism is more common in people younger than 40, while hypothyroidism usually occurs in individuals over 60. Also, women are 10 times more likely to suffer from hyperthyroidism than men. Signs and symptoms of the diseases are listed below. If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor about thyroid testing.

Hyperthyroidism

- Feeling nervous, moody, weak, or tired
- Fast heartbeat or trouble breathing
- Shaking hands
- Sweaty, warm, or itchy skin
- More frequent bowel movements
- Fine, soft hair that is falling out
- Weight loss even though you eat the same or more than usual

Hypothyroidism

- Feeling tired, weak, and/ or depressed
- Dry skin and brittle nails
- Difficulty standing cold temperatures
- Constipation
- Memory problems or trouble thinking clearly
- Heavy or irregular menstrual periods
- Weight gain

Know your numbers

As part of the "Know your Numbers" Campaign, Manatee encourages you to keep track of important health "numbers" such as body mass index, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Other important numbers to know are your thyroid levels.



Thyroid testing is included in the Qualifying Event lab work. If it is your year to qualify, there is no copay for your comprehensive lab panel, but you must use one of the 4 lab draw options (Quest Service Center, IMM, Pinnacle Medical Group, or Worksite Lab Draw). Go to www.ManateeYourChoice.com and click Qualifying Events for detail. For questions about Qualifying Event lab work, check with Member Advocacy at (941) 748-4501 Ext 6412.

To the right is a list of normal levels for different types of thyroid hormones. The "normal levels" may vary slightly depending on a variety of factors, so it is up to your physician to determine if you are in the normal range, and if not, whether drug therapy is necessary.

Tested Levels	Normal Value
TSH	0.5-4.7 microunits/mL
Total T3	60-181 ng/dL
Free T3	1.4-4.4 pg/mL
Total T4	4.5-10.9 microg/dL
Free T4	0.8-2.7 ng/dL

Is it okay to use generic medications?

Millions of Americans take thyroid medications, such as Synthroid, Levoxyl, or levothyroxine. Some people worry that generic thyroid medications will not work as well brand medications. This is not true! A few years ago, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required that all levothyroxine products obtain FDA approval to determine which medications were equivalent to each other. It is important to note that the FDA found that Levoxyl and Synthroid were considered to be equivalent, something that was controversial in the past. This helped to prove that levothyroxine and other generic medications are both safe and effective.

Medicine Cabinet Alert!

Remember: Manatee members have a **\$0 copay** when generic prescriptions are filled at MHN preferred pharmacies. If you are taking a brand thyroid medication and are switching doses or are newly diagnosed with a thyroid condition, ask your doctor if a generic medication is right for you!

Blame it on my Thyroid

While many people know that hypothyroidism can cause weight gain, some people think that there is nothing that they can do about it. They may feel that this is an inevitable part of the disease and give up hoping trying to stay fit. Even worse, they may use this as an excuse to overeat thinking that it is not their fault and that the weight gain will happen anyway. This is not true. If you are diagnosed with hypothyroidism, eating right and exercising are more important than ever. If left untreated, hypothyroidism can cause obesity, joint pain, heart disease, depression, and infertility. Added weight gain and lack of exercise could make these problems even worse. Since exhaustion is common in hypothyroidism, it is best to start out with light exercises such as brisk walking, cycling, swimming, or aerobics. Exercising helps to build up muscles, increase circulation, decrease body weight, and improve digestion, all of which can alleviate the symptoms and improve the condition.

Iron supplements or multivitamins containing iron	Walnuts	Some cholesterol lowering drugs such as colestipol and cholestyramine	Antacids containing aluminum or magnesium
Calcium Supplements	Some ulcer medications such as Carafate.	Foods high in salt such as potato chips	Certain ulcer medications

Along with exercise, proper diet is important. Many doctors believe that instead of focusing on a specific diet, patients should concentrate on avoiding foods and supplements that affect the positive aspects of the hormone medication. Some foods can interfere with the absorption of synthetic thyroid hormone medications that you may be taking. To avoid a potential interaction, the foods and products below should only be consumed several hours before or after taking your thyroid medication. Talk to your doctor before you changed any medication regimens that you are on since this could affect your thyroid drug levels.

Did You Know there are more health awareness issues than there are months in a year? January is also Cervical Health Awareness Month...

- Each year, 11,000 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with cervical cancer.
- One of the major causes of cervical cancer is Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is a common infection. Some types of this infection can lead to cervical cancer and other types of cancer, while other types of this infection can lead to genital warts.
- The HPV vaccine (Gardasil or Cervarix) can prevent certain types of HPV that can lead to cervical cancer
- The HPV vaccine is recommended for children and women ages 9-26.
- The best way to screen for cervical cancer is by having a doctor perform a Pap test every two years, beginning at age 21.

Manatee Health Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice. It is for reference only and should not be used to determine treatment for your specific medical conditions-only a health care provider can do this. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult you physician regarding the use of over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or consult your physician regarding the use of prescription or over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or before starting any new diet, fitness, or supplement regimen.

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