

BASAL METABOLIC TEMPERATURE TEST

Why Take Your Temperature To Measure Your Thyroid Function?

This test is used to detect your thyroid status – *beyond* what regular blood tests like TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone); FT3 (free T3 hormone) or FT4 may have shown.

It's based on the simple, yet scientific premise that in a sense, your thyroid is much like the thermostat in your air-conditioned home. This little device keeps track of how cold or warm it is inside the house, and aims to maintain precisely the temperature you have chosen to be most comfortable for you.

A healthy thyroid will keep your body/'house' at a steady 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 Fahrenheit), never mind the external temperature of your environment. However, as your thyroid starts to fail in this major function, it's no longer able to keep your body at this constant 37 degrees, and you'll find that your temperature becomes persistently lower.

But Why Does The Body Temperature Need To Be At This Precise Level?

Briefly, every metabolic function in your *entire* body is completely dependent on enzyme function. In turn, enzyme function is highly dependent on temperature.

Therefore, if your body temperature is below normal, then *all* enzymes in *every* cell of your body will be working *below* par, which in turn can have a profound effect on how efficiently your cells - and hence your body – are able to function.

It's actually as simple – but fundamental - as that. Chronic low body temperature = poor body function, which can end up causing a plethora of symptoms.

The problem is that the 'normal' blood tests, presently used to measure thyroid function, are in fact quite insensitive, plus their *medical* interpretation is also far too 'coarse'.

End result? Many people suffering from a genuinely ***under-functioning*** (compared to ***mal***-functioning) thyroid will not be picked up by the current medical diagnostic system.

This can have both sad, as well as grave repercussions, since people suffering from very real symptoms are fobbed off as 'imagining' their un-wellness, or worse, are prescribed completely inappropriate drugs for their symptoms.

How A Miss-Diagnosis Can Result In A Wrong Prescription

Let's take just one example of this type of situation. A common symptom many people with a sluggish thyroid may experience is depression. However, if your doctor isn't able to 'see' the connection between your unhappiness and your thyroid - because the blood tests keep saying everything is 'normal' - then that doctor is also quite likely to prescribe anti-depressants.

Yet, in this example, the core reason for this patient's depression is low thyroid function – for which anti-depressants are not really the appropriate treatment, as they won't treat the *primary* cause.

Anti-depressant therapy may help that person feel better, but since it is not directly dealing with the *source* of the problem, it most likely means that person will also need to stay on anti-depressants for a very long time.

Hence, in order to fundamentally get rid of that 'depression', what they need is the correct thyroid support therapy. Then, as that person's thyroid function comes back to true-normal, so will their 'depression' simply melt away.

All this and more is explored at: www.holistic-hypothyroidism-solutions.com/

How To Do This Basal Metabolic Temperature Test

You'll need one of the "old-fashioned" mercury thermometers (usually still available from most chemists/pharmacies).

In order to 'reset' the thermometer, shake it down the night before you plan to do the test. If you're not sure how to do this, or how to read a thermometer, then get the chemist/pharmacist to show you when you buy it. Once shaken down, place the thermometer by the bed where you can easily reach it upon waking.

Shaking down the thermometer the night before is important, simply because the very act of all that shaking - necessary to re-set the mercury column - is like doing exercise, and will raise your body temperature. Hence, if you did this just before taking your temperature, you won't get the lowest – or 'basal' – level of your body temperature!

To get a better average of your readings, the temperature needs to be taken for at least 3 consecutive mornings, ***before you get out of bed***. This is crucial as *any* activity in the morning, on waking, will activate your metabolic rate, causing your temperature to rise.

However, we're trying to establish the absolute lowest, or *basal* level, your body drops down to over a 24 hour cycle.

Next, place the thermometer ***underarm*** for ***ten*** minutes immediately upon waking.

For menstruating women, it's important to take these 3 temperatures on the mornings of day 2, 3 and 4 of their next cycle (i.e. the day they start bleeding is considered the first day).

For men and non-menstruating women, the temperature can be taken on any 3 – or more - consecutive mornings.

Once you have recorded the 3 or more readings, work out the average temperature.

Interpretation

Yet again, a genuinely normal body temperature in a healthy human being is 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). If the average reading is *below* 36.5 degrees Celsius (97.7 degrees Fahrenheit), then this is regarded as - not an absolute – but definitely a good indication, along with a thorough consideration of a person's symptom profile, that they have an under-functioning, or sluggish thyroid.

The more the average temperature is below 36.5 degrees Celsius, the more the thyroid is under-functioning. Any average temperature below 36.0 degrees Celsius, (96.8 degrees Fahrenheit) would suggest that the thyroid is starting to go into significant *mal-*function. In such cases, a TSH reading (done on a blood sample) is also more likely to come back as 2.0 mU/L or higher.

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[ The conversion formula for changing a reading from Celsius to Fahrenheit is:

$$^{\circ}\text{F} = (9/5 \text{ } ^{\circ}\text{C}) + 32^{\circ}$$

For example:

36.5 degrees Celsius to Fahrenheit:  $36.5 \times 9 = 328.5$ , divided by 5 = 65.7 + 32 = 97.7 ]

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