

THYROID SWELLING (GOITRE AND OTHER LUMPS)

What is a goitre (thyroid swelling)?

Usually, one cannot see or feel a normal thyroid gland. Goitre is nothing but an enlarged thyroid gland, which appears as a swelling in front of your neck. Nodules (growth of cells) are little lumps in the thyroid gland. They can be single or many, solid or fluid filled.

What could be causing this?

Sometimes there is no identifiable cause, but here are some common reasons:-

- Overgrowth of normal thyroid tissue- Can be adenoma (single nodule) or Goitre (can be smooth or with multiple nodules)
- Thyroid cyst- Fluid filled swelling
- Overactivity (Hyperthyroidism) or Underactivity of gland (Hypothyroid)
- Hormonal changes- Puberty, pregnancy or menopause
- Inflamed gland- Thyroiditis
- Thyroid cancer

When do you need to see a doctor?

It is important to be examined by your doctor when you notice a goitre/nodule who can then suggest the next steps as appropriate.

Which tests may need to be done?

Blood tests – Thyroid function tests

- Ultrasound scan - It can give more information on the number and size of nodules in the thyroid.
- FNAC (Fine needle aspiration cytology) - Using a thin needle, some cells are removed from a thyroid nodule. The cells are then examined under a microscope for more detailed information.
- Nuclear medicine scan - This is a special type of imaging using radioactive tracer medicine which tells the doctor more about how different areas in your thyroid are functioning including possible cancerous areas.

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