

THYROIDITIS

What is thyroiditis?

Thyroiditis is an inflammation (swelling) of the thyroid gland which can be due to various reasons which have to be differentiated because the assessment and treatment will vary according to the cause.

What are the types of thyroiditis?

Thyroiditis is broadly classified into

- (1) acute suppurative thyroiditis due to bacterial infection;
- (2) subacute thyroiditis due to viral infection of the gland; and
- (3) chronic thyroiditis, which is usually autoimmune in nature

Thyroiditis can also be silent and present in the postpartum phase. Certain drugs and radiation can also cause thyroiditis.

Which investigations will help you diagnose thyroiditis?

Your doctor may advise tests like thyroid function tests, CBC, ESR, Anti TPO antibodies according to your symptoms. ^{99m}Tc-thyroid scan for thyroid is useful in differentiating between hyperthyroidism and subacute thyroiditis because there is reduced uptake in the thyroid gland in the destructive phase of subacute thyroiditis whereas uptake is increased in hyperthyroidism.

What is the treatment of thyroiditis?

Treatment of thyroiditis varies according to the cause.

Acute thyroiditis requires immediate antibiotic therapy. Subacute thyroiditis is self-limiting; therefore, the goals of treatment are to relieve discomfort and to control the abnormal thyroid function with symptomatic treatment like pain alleviators and Beta blocker therapy if not contraindicated. Patients with overt hypothyroidism who have high thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) and low free T4 levels require treatment with levothyroxine.

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