

Thyroid Eye Disease

Thyroid Eye Disease, or Graves' Ophthalmopathy is more common in women than in men.

1 Introduction

Thyroid Eye Disease is a problem that develops in some patients with an overactive thyroid caused by Graves' Disease. Up to one-half of people with Graves' Disease develop eye symptoms. Please use this guide to understand the cause, symptoms and treatment of Thyroid Eye Disease.

2 Cause

Graves' Disease is an autoimmune condition caused by antibodies directed against receptors present in the thyroid gland, as well as the surface of the cells behind the eyes. The activity of the antibodies results in hyperthyroidism and may include Thyroid Eye Disease.

3 Symptoms

In most cases, eye symptoms will manifest within six months of the onset of Graves' Disease. Symptoms include:

- Feeling of irritation or grittiness in the eyes

- Inflammation/redness of the conjunctiva
- Swelling of the eyelids
- Excessive tearing or dry eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Bulging of the eyes (proptosis)
- Double vision

In more advanced cases, the patient may display decreased eye movement, incomplete closure of the eye, corneal ulceration, compression of the optic nerve and in rare cases loss of vision.

4 Treatment

There is no cure for Graves' Disease or Thyroid Eye Disease and treatment is targeted toward relief of symptoms.

- Wear sunglasses to protect the eyes from the sun and wind
- Use Lubricating eye drops
- Injections to reduce proptosis (eye protrusion)
- Eye muscle surgery
- Orbital decompression surgery

Did you know?

More than 12% of the U.S. population will develop a thyroid condition in their lifetime.

For more information on diabetes and supportive resources please visit www.diabetes.org.

References:

<https://www.thyroid.org/graves-eye-disease/>

https://www.thyroid.org/wp-content/uploads/patients/brochures/graves_eye_disease_brochure.pdf

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/delveinsight-blog/blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/28172444/thyroid-eye-disease-infographic-1.jpg>