



## What Does the Thyroid Do?



### Overview

Your thyroid is a gland at the base of your neck. But what does the thyroid do, exactly? Let's take a moment to learn more about it.

### Healthy thyroid

A healthy thyroid is usually butterfly-shaped. It has two lobes connected by a small strip of tissue. Your thyroid is found at the front of your neck. It sits below your voice box and in front of your windpipe.

### The thyroid's role

The thyroid is an important gland. It makes and releases "thyroid hormone." That is a mix of a few hormones that control many things your body does. One important job your thyroid does is controlling your metabolism. That's the process your body uses to convert food into energy. Your thyroid regulates the way your body uses calories. This influences your body weight. Your thyroid also affects many other body processes. It plays a role in brain development. It affects your heart rate and body temperature. It affects your skin, bones, muscles and other tissues.

### Living without a thyroid

Your thyroid can become diseased or damaged. If that happens, we can take it out with surgery. You can live a normal life without a thyroid. You will need to take thyroid hormone for the rest of your life. For more info, talk to your doctor.

