What You ACTUALLY Need to Know About Long COVID and Thyroid Health Transcript

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Thyroid Dysfunction and Long COVID Overview

It's often an aggravation of thyroid, It's often an aggravation of thyroid, but also there are other hormonal things but also there are other hormonal things that should be checked as well.

that should be checked as well. Hey, I'm Dr. A, and on this channel we Hey, I'm Dr. A, and on this channel we answer all sorts of questions focused answer all sorts of questions focused around integrative medicine, around integrative medicine, naturopathic medicine, and things such naturopathic medicine, and things such as chronic illness, cancer, etc. The as chronic illness, cancer, etc. The first thing that I will say is when it first thing that I will say is when it comes to thyroid trouble and long COVID, comes to thyroid trouble and long COVID, it could be the egg or it could be the it could be the egg or it could be the chicken. And the reason I say that is chicken.

Chicken or Egg: Pre-Existing vs New Thyroid Issues

And the reason I say that is there are times where we've had patients there are times where we've had patients who had some thyroid trouble and then who had some thyroid trouble and then they got COVID and then they get long they got COVID and then they get long COVID and now their thyroid trouble is COVID and now their thyroid trouble is worse and their doctor just assumed, worse and their doctor just assumed, well, you always had thyroid problems well, you always had thyroid problems and you've been on the thyroid hormone and you've been on the thyroid hormone medicine and so that can't be part of medicine and so that can't be part of your long COVID because we already fixed your long COVID because we already fixed that problem, right? And then it turns that problem, right? And then it turns out that their thyroid function is even out that their thyroid function is even worse than it was before. And so the worse than it was before. And so the medication or the treatments are not medication or the treatments are not balanced well for that. And indeed the balanced well for that. And indeed the thyroid being undertreated or poorly thyroid being undertreated or poorly treated is aggravating the fatigue and treated is aggravating the fatigue and brain fog portions and other portions brain fog portions and other portions along COVID. So that would be one of the along COVID. So that would be one of the chicken and egg situations. The other is chicken and egg situations. The other is which we know now people who never had a which we know now people who never had a thyroid problem in their life. They've thyroid problem in their life. They've been getting screened for thyroid been getting screened for thyroid troubles and everything's checked out.

troubles and everything's checked out. Everything's normal, normal, normal. Everything's normal, normal, normal. We've had them have COVID spike protein We've had them have COVID spike protein injury, whatever, you know, triggered injury, whatever, you know, triggered it, and then suddenly when they get long it, and then suddenly when they get long COVID or long COVID symptoms, somebody COVID or long COVID symptoms, somebody goes and they check their thyroid and goes and they check their thyroid and the first time in their whole life, they the first time in their whole life, they now have new thyroid disorder. So that now have new thyroid disorder. So that would be the other side of the chicken would be the other side of the chicken and egg. And I don't know in that and egg. And I don't know in that analogy which is the chicken and which analogy which is the chicken and which is the egg, but you get the point. So is the egg, but you get the point.

Why Thyroid Symptoms Overlap with Long COVID

So both of them can happen. Well then the both of them can happen. Well then the net effect is the same once you get net effect is the same once you get there because the long COVID some of the there because the long COVID some of the most common symptoms are aggravated by most common symptoms are aggravated by thyroid dysfunction. Fatigue, brain fog, thyroid dysfunction. Fatigue, brain fog, certain types of pain, dry skin, other certain types of pain, dry skin, other things all are signs and symptoms of things all are signs and symptoms of thyroid problems. Now is it always thyroid problems. Now is it always thyroid that creates these things? No, thyroid that creates these things? No, that's not how that works. It's often an that's not how that works.

Why Thyroid Testing Is Often Missed

It's often an aggravation of thyroid, but also there aggravation of thyroid, but also there are other hormonal things that should be are other hormonal things that should be checked as well. But this question was checked as well. But this question was specifically about thyroid. So we always specifically about thyroid. So we always talk to folks and and if it's a patient, talk to folks and and if it's a patient, make sure that they understand that make sure that they understand that look, if you have long COVID going on look, if you have long COVID going on and you've had any reason the spike and you've had any reason the spike protein levels have risen and that might protein levels have risen and that might be part of your problem. Among many be part of your problem. Among many things that we should check, one is your things that we should check, one is your thyroid. And in a lot of cases, we'll thyroid. And in a lot of cases, we'll see people come out and they've been see people come out and they've been maybe to their primary care and they've maybe to their primary care and they've got long COVID and they've done a big got long COVID and they've done a big panel of labs and you look and you say, panel of labs and you look and you say, "Well, the thyroid's missing here." And "Well, the thyroid's missing here." And the patient will say, "Well, they said, the patient will say, "Well, they said, you know, I've never had thyroid you know, I've never had thyroid problems, so why check it now?" Well, in problems, so why check it now?" Well, in the literature, but also just from what, the literature, but also just from what, you know, most of us who deal with you know, most of us who deal with chronic illness have seen, the chronic illness have seen, the experience of COVID and spike protein experience of COVID and spike protein exposure can turn you into having a exposure can turn you into having a thyroid problem. So the first thing is thyroid problem.

Essential Thyroid Labs to Check

So the first thing is you know first do no harm make sure you know first do no harm make sure their problem is or is not there. Now if their problem is or is not there. Now if you check the person out and there's no you check the person out and there's no thyroid problems in their labs then thyroid problems in their labs then there may be other things but in many there may be other things but in many many cases there's a couple of options many cases there's a couple of options with the thyroid that need to be looked with the thyroid that need to be looked at. One is did it get tested at all? So at. One is did it get tested at all? So that's sort of the standard TSH andor that's sort of the standard TSH andor TSH plus T4. Those are kind of the TSH plus T4. Those are kind of the standard screening tests. We also now standard screening tests.

Autoimmune Thyroiditis After COVID

We also now know, however, that new autoimmunity can know, however, that new autoimmunity can be created during the COVID spike be created during the COVID spike protein exposure period. And so protein exposure period. And so autoimmune thyroiditis, it can be a autoimmune thyroiditis, it can be a brand new thing in that setting, too.

brand new thing in that setting, too. Well, that doesn't always show up with Well, that doesn't always show up with the TSH and T4 test. And so, you need to the TSH and T4 test. And so, you need to do the thyroid antibodies as well. So, do the thyroid antibodies as well. So, when we're doing that, we add the when we're doing that, we add the thyroid antibodies to the TSH T4. Also, thyroid antibodies to the TSH T4.

T4 to T3 Conversion Problems

Also, it can mess with your conversion of T4 it can mess with your conversion of T4 to T3 hormone. T3 being the active one. to T3 hormone. T3 being the active one.

So, normally we check not just TSH and So, normally we check not just TSH and T4, but also T3. And then the thyroid T4, but also T3. And then the thyroid antibodies. And then there's one more, antibodies. And then there's one more, and this is the sneaky tricky one. This and this is the sneaky tricky one.

The Role of Reverse T3 in Chronic Illness

This is a test that only really is relevant is a test that only really is relevant to chronically ill people, but people to chronically ill people, but people with long COVID you can put into the with long COVID you can put into the chronically ill basket. And it's chronically ill basket. And it's something called reverse T3. So he said something called reverse T3. So he said T3 is the active thyroid hormone that T3 is the active thyroid hormone that the body converts from T4 binds at your the body converts from T4 binds at your mitochondria and at the nuclear mitochondria and at the nuclear membranes in around where your DNA is membranes in around where your DNA is made and stuff in your cells. There is made and stuff in your cells. There is under stress, so chronic illness created under stress, so chronic illness created a blocking hormone called reverse T3.

a blocking hormone called reverse T3. It's the anti-T3. So you can have normal It's the anti-T3. So you can have normal T3 floating around and then reverse T3 T3 floating around and then reverse T3 will come along and if your body's under will come along and if your body's under a lot of stress, it raises the reverse a lot of stress, it raises the reverse T3 levels. It will block the T3 from T3 levels. It will block the T3 from binding. So your thyroid hormones look binding. So your thyroid hormones look normal, your TSH may be normal, your T4 normal, your TSH may be normal, your T4 and T3 may be totally normal, your and T3 may be totally normal, your antibodies may be normal, but your body antibodies may be normal, but your body feels like it's hypothyroid because the feels like it's hypothyroid because the reverse T3 keeps elevating. So when reverse T3 keeps elevating. So when we're checking people for this, do they we're checking people for this, do they have a new thyroid problem? We don't have a new thyroid problem?

Complete Thyroid Panel for Long COVID Patients

We don't just do the screening test. We do TSH. just do the screening test. We do TSH. We check the hormones T3 and T4. We We check the hormones T3 and T4. We check the antibodies, thyroid check the antibodies, thyroid antibodies, and then we check reverse T3 antibodies, and then we check reverse T3 because it's now become a chronic because it's now become a chronic illness category. If all of those are illness category. If all of those are normal, the chance that the thyroid is normal, the chance that the thyroid is causing part of the problem is very, causing part of the problem is very, very low. It's not zero, but it's very, very low. It's not zero, but it's very, very low. But it's amazing how many of very low. But it's amazing how many of those things we find that weren't a those things we find that weren't a problem before COVID and spike exposure problem before COVID and spike exposure that now are in a chronically ill, that now are in a chronically ill, longcoid picture. All right. All right.

longcoid picture. All right. All right. Well, I hope that answers that question. Well, I hope that answers that question. Thank you all of you subscribers. We're Thank you all of you subscribers. We're loving the community growing. If you loving the community growing. If you haven't subscribed yet, it's free to do.

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