

# The Agave Apple

## Thyroid Awareness Month

The thyroid is a small gland in your neck that produces hormones which are essential for life. These hormones regulate the body's metabolism, growth and development. Due to the vital functions it controls, abnormalities in the thyroid can cause a wide variety of bothersome symptoms. Since January is national thyroid awareness month we will be discussing the basics about the most two common thyroid disorders.

### 20 Million

The estimated number of Americans that have some form of thyroid disease.

### 4-7x

Women are 4-7 times more likely to develop a thyroid disorder.

### 60%

The percentage of people who are unaware of their thyroid disorder.

**The two most common thyroid disorders are Hashimoto's Disease and Grave's Disease, both of which cause alterations in the amount of thyroid hormone.** These are autoimmune diseases, meaning the body attacks itself leading to a change in thyroid hormone production. To learn more about less common thyroid disorders and thyroid cancer, follow Agave Family Physicians on Facebook.

## Hashimoto's Disease

**The most common form of hypothyroidism in the United States.**

### Under production of hormones.

The immune system attacks the thyroid until it is damaged to the point that it is unable to make enough of the thyroid hormones.

### Bodily functions slow down.

This can lead to weight gain, depression, fatigue, changes in hair or nails, constipation and muscle weakness or pain.

## Grave's Disease

**The most common form of hyperthyroidism in the United States.**

### Over production of hormones.

The immune system produces cells that act like hormone that regulates the production of thyroid hormones, leading to an overproduction of the thyroid hormones.

### Bodily functions speed up.

This can lead to weight loss, anxiety, irregular or rapid heart rate, difficulty sleeping, trembling fingers, or diarrhea.

**If you are experiencing symptoms of a thyroid disorder please speak with your primary care physician. A simple blood test can aid in the diagnosis of these disorders**

**Treatment.** Generally speaking, the treatment for these thyroid disorders are replacement of the hormones through medication. If thyroid medication is not tolerated or symptoms are not well managed, permanent options, such as thyroid removal or destruction of the thyroid through radioactive iodine therapy, may be beneficial. However, if the thyroid is destroyed or removed, treatment for hypothyroidism will be required.