



A Simple Guide To Thyroid Eye Disease, Diagnosis, Treatment And Related Conditions (A Simple Guide to Medical Conditions)

Kenneth Kee

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Chapter 1

Thyroid eye disease

What is Thyroid Eye Disease?

Thyroid eye disease (TED) is a medical disorder marked by swelling of the muscles and fatty tissues surrounding the eyeball within the eye socket (orbit).

This swelling is due to the inflammation of these tissues.

There is restricted space inside the eye orbit so when the tissues swell, the eyeball is pushed forward.

This produces the clear window in the front portion of the eye (the cornea) with the loss of the protection, provided by the eyelids.

The eyeball can not move so easily as the muscles that control it works less well.

When the disease is very severe, the nerve connecting the eyeball to the nervous system can be injured through compression.

This period of swelling is followed by a healing response.

What is the cause of Thyroid eye disease?

Cause:

The exact cause is not known.

Evidence shows that the body produces a series of antibodies against its own tissues in the orbit.

Thyroid eye disease is an eye condition linked to autoimmune thyroid disease.

Autoimmune diseases

The body immune system typically produces small proteins (antibodies) to attack germs (bacteria, viruses and other microbes).

In patient with autoimmune diseases, the immune system makes antibodies against tissues of the body.

It is not known why this happens.

Some people are more likely to form autoimmune diseases.

Something might spark off the immune system to attack the body's own tissues.

People with excess thyroid hormones can form eye disease.

TED is sometimes called other names such as dysthyroid eye disease, thyroid ophthalmopathy, Graves' ophthalmopathy or ophthalmic Graves' disease.

Symptoms of Thyroid disease:

1. Neck thyroid swelling
2. Heat intolerance
3. Tremors
4. Sweatiness
5. Loss of weight
6. Palpitations

Pathophysiology of Thyroid eye disease

Autoimmune thyroid disease happens when the body's antibodies attack tissues of the thyroid organ.

In some people, these same antibodies also attack the tissues surrounding the eyeball.

This is called Thyroid Eye Disease.

The cause is not known exactly why this happens in some people and not in others.

TED is an autoimmune disease, most frequently happening in link with an over active thyroid gland.

Sometimes, TED happens when the thyroid gland seems to be working normally.

People with an apparently normal thyroid gland at the time of TED have normally had abnormal thyroid function in the past

The patients go on to form abnormal thyroid function in the future.

Who gets thyroid eye disease?

This is a rare disorder involving about 16 women in every 100,000 people and 3 men in every 100,000 people yearly.

Most of these patients have a problem with an over active thyroid gland and have an underlying autoimmune condition.

It normally happens in middle age.

Some patients have genes that make it more likely that they will get thyroid eye disease.

It is also more likely to form if the patients smoke.

What are the symptoms of thyroid eye disease?

Symptoms are produced by the tissues of the eye socket swelling and pushing the eyeball forward:

The biochemical events result in swelling of the orbital soft tissues particularly the eye muscles and orbital fat.

Eye symptoms are:

1. Blurring of vision
2. Staring appearance of eyes

The eyes may look more bulgy, giving the patient a staring appearance.

3. Protrusion of the eyes
4. Tearing
5. Eye discomfort and gritty sensation

The eyes may ache

The front of the eyes may feel dry if the tear-producing gland (the lacrimal gland) has been involved.

6. Eye redness

The front of the eyes can become irritated and red as the sensitive cornea is less well protected or lubricated by the eyelids.

7. Puffy eyelids

8. Double vision

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