

Hypothyroidism: My Mother's Struggle

My mother has hypothyroidism. While hypothyroidism is very common in the United States, it is, in most cases, chronic. Because of her hypothyroidism, my mother has had long spells of fatigue and has suffered from weight gain that is difficult to lose and regulate due to the thyroid's inactivity. She is also at risk of having high cholesterol. In the past, there weren't many options for people with hypothyroidism other than specific diets and recommendations to exercise. However, with biomedical research, a suitable treatment to hypothyroidism has been found.

Animal thyroid supplements, most commonly made of extracts from pig thyroid, provide hormones that the underactive thyroid isn't able to create. The pig thyroid supplements my mother takes help regulate her thyroid, make her feel more alert, and help keep her weight stable. For many people animal thyroid medication provides mental security in knowing they have help in regulating thyroid problems and making them more manageable.

The most popular brand of animal thyroid medication is Armour Thyroid, made from pig thyroid glands, and is a combination of T4 and T3 hormones. Many patients choose brands such as Armour Thyroid over synthetic brands due to the combination of T4 and T3 hormones that isn't common in synthetic medication. Animal thyroid medication is also well-liked due to its all-natural allure.

Animal thyroid supplements, however, are quickly becoming outdated. In another feat of biomedical engineering, scientists have been able to synthetically manufacture the same hormones found in natural supplements by studying animal thyroids. Because of the research done on pig thyroids, synthetic supplements are quickly becoming the number one way of treating hypothyroidism. Synthetic thyroid medication has been created to mirror the same hormone levels that humans have and can be concentrated in different amounts, creating more precise dosages for patients. Whereas natural hormones are unpurified, synthetic thyroid

medication allows for a pure concentration of the hormones needed, leaving out any unnecessary substances. Since natural supplements are taken directly from animal thyroid, there are unpurified substances included which aren't naturally found in humans. These, while not necessarily harmful, still have unknown effects on the human body.

My mother is currently taking the natural supplement. When she began her treatment, she had been prescribed synthetic medication. This medication, however, did not help with her fatigue or her weight regulation. Since switching to the natural supplement, she has felt more energetic and although she has not lost all of the weight she desires, the medication has prevented her from gaining additional weight. We are eagerly awaiting the next advance brought by biomedical engineering to help her fight her battle against hypothyroidism.