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### The Thyroid Heart Connection

If you or a loved one suffers from a thyroid disorder, it is vital to stay on top of the new and emerging research findings delving into the relationship between the heart and the thyroid.

A study conducted by researchers at the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine indicated that even mild abnormalities in thyroid function can exponentially increase heart health risks. Even the men whose thyroid fluctuations were so faint that they would not meet current diagnostic standards for thyroid disease had as much as twice the risk of developing heart disease when compared with subjects who experienced no thyroid hormone fluctuations whatsoever.

A study conducted by researchers at Newcastle University's School of Clinical Medical Sciences found that when patients with minor shortages of thyroid hormone were treated with standard hypothyroid medication, the majority experienced a significant reduction in the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The most relevant changes were seen in declining LDL cholesterol levels and weight loss. In addition, most of the patients reported an increase in energy and a decline in fatigue. For some, the boost in energy levels resulted in more physical activity.

One investigation conducted by researchers at the University of Birmingham (UK) indicated that improper thyroid function may also play a role in the development of other heart abnormalities, as well. Specifically, the researchers zeroed in on the thyroid's possible role as a cause of atrial fibrillation. This well-known heartbeat abnormality is associated with a heightened risk of stroke and heart disease.

January is Thyroid Awareness Month, so if you suspect you may have thyroid related issues, see your doctor and do what is necessary to make sure your heart stays healthy too.