

Hyperparathyroidism (primary): diagnosis, assessment and initial management

Information for the public

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Hyperparathyroidism: the care you should expect

Hyperparathyroidism is a condition in which 1 or more of the 4 parathyroid glands located in the neck start producing too much parathyroid hormone. This raises the level of calcium in the body and can cause a range of symptoms like feeling unusually thirsty, needing to urinate a lot or becoming constipated. Hyperparathyroidism can be cured by surgery. If surgery isn't possible, the symptoms can be relieved by treatment with medicine. But hyperparathyroidism often goes unrecognised – usually because it's mistaken for other problems or for age-related changes (it is more common in people over 50). Without treatment, hyperparathyroidism can cause long-term complications like kidney stones, bone-related problems and heart disease.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with hyperparathyroidism by making sure:

- there is better awareness about the symptoms and healthcare professionals know when to test for it
- people with hyperparathyroidism are diagnosed without delay
- doctors have clear advice on when to offer surgery for hyperparathyroidism, and how to use tests to decide the best type of surgery
- people have follow-up checks as often as needed depending on how their condition is managed.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of any treatment?
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to the treatment that worry you more than others?
- How will the treatment affect your day to day life?
- What happens if you don't want to have treatment?

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about hyperparathyroidism.

The organisation below can give you more advice and support.

- [Parathyroid UK](#), 01342 316315

NICE is not responsible for the content of this website.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by hyperparathyroidism and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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