When a person's thyroid gland cannot make enough thyroid hormone for the body's needs (called hypothyroidism) or when a person's thyroid has been removed due to disease such as cancer, **replacement therapy** is necessary. (For more information about thyroid conditions, please see the *Thyroid Function Tests* factsheet).

The goal of thyroid replacement therapy is to closely replicate normal thyroid function. This can be achieved with synthetic thyroid hormone medicine.

**How Is the Dose of Thyroid Hormone Chosen?**

The initial amount of thyroid hormone prescribed is based on a person's weight, age, and medical conditions. Your health care provider will then do periodic physical exams and blood tests to check thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) levels. The dose will be adjusted as needed to keep the thyroid functioning in a normal range.

**How Do I Take Thyroid Hormone?**

Thyroid hormone is taken just once a day in pill form. It is very important to be consistent:

- Take it on an empty stomach. Food in the stomach can affect absorption into the body.
- Take it at the same time each day—either first thing in the morning or at night before bed.
- Discuss with your health care provider any other medications or supplements you take. This might affect the best time to take your thyroid hormone to avoid possible interactions.
- Do not stop taking thyroid hormone without talking with your health care provider.
- If you miss a dose, it is usually best to take the missed dose as soon as you remember, or it is safe to take two pills the next day—one in the morning and one in the evening.
- Get your thyroid hormone and TSH levels checked periodically, **even if you are feeling fine**, so your dose can be adjusted if needed.