



Graves' Disease

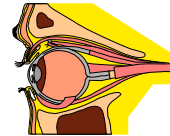


What is it?

***Grave's Disease-** toxic diffuse goiter, too much thyroid hormone, typical signs of hyperthyroidism, large gland bulge in the neck

***Autoimmune Disorder-** the body produces antibodies that stimulate the thyroid gland

-Pregnancy- antibodies cross the placenta and stimulate the fetus thyroid gland; may cause stillbirth, miscarriage, premature birth



Signs and Symptoms:

***Exophthalmos-** Bulging eyes that bulge outward, intense stare, hard to move the eyes due to the muscles that move the eyes, results in double vision (eyeglass prisms may help)

-Eyelids- do not close completely resulting in dry eyes and injury, this is an early clue to Grave's Disease

-Helpful Hints- eye drops, elevate the head of the bed, sleeping with eyelids taped shut, occasionally taking diuretics

***Shins-** raised areas of skin, less common; itchy, red, feels hard when pressed with the finger

***Infant-** Poor weight gain, high blood pressure, fast heart rate, irritability or nervousness, diarrhea, vomiting (may start within several days after birth)

-Goiter- may press on windpipe and may interfere with breathing

-Rapid Heart Rate- can lead to heart failure



Facts:



***Neonatal Graves' Disease-** potentially life-threatening illness that can occur in infants whose mother has Graves' Disease

***Fatal-** if not recognized and treated properly; if treated recover in weeks; at risk for 6 months to 1 year, can lead to premature closure of the skull, mental retardation, hyperactivity later in children, slowed growth, may need a blood transfusion

What can I do?

***See your Physician-**oral corticosteroid drugs, X-ray treatment to the orbits, eye surgery

