

## ETA Public Health Board Statement

### COVID-19: Information and Recommendations for Patients with Thyroid Diseases

The European Thyroid Association (ETA) signals its solidarity with all thyroid patients, providing guidance and support in the midst of the devastating COVID-19 crisis afflicting every country and territory in the world. Via the Public Health Board, we provide you with this overview and some useful information on various aspects of the ongoing situation so that, armed with more awareness and enhanced knowledge, you may better protect yourselves.

COVID-19 is the name given to the disease associated with the virus SARS-CoV-2, which affects people of all ages, but particularly the elderly, mostly men: current data confirm that persons 70 years and older are the most likely to be hospitalized during this pandemic. Regarding all age groups, however, those who are at greater risk of developing a severe course of disease include people with underlying health conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes mellitus, arterial hypertension, obesity, cancer, those with a suppressed immune system, and smokers.

- ❖ Patients with thyroid diseases do not appear to be at higher risk of COVID-19 infection, although it is not currently known whether SARS-CoV-2 can in any way affect thyroid function. Please be advised to take your daily thyroid medication.
- ❖ Despite the lack of analyses to show whether patients with autoimmune thyroiditis, like Hashimoto's thyroiditis or Graves' disease, are at greater risk for contracting COVID-19, as has been found with e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, they should at present be considered as potentially at low -to-medium risk due to their disturbed immune response.
- ❖ Patients with thyroid cancer resistant to therapy, under treatment with a class of drugs named tyrosine kinase inhibitors, or following radioiodine treatment should be considered at increased risk.
- ❖ All patients, and most particularly those at greater risk, should strictly follow the advice of their family doctor and the recommendations of their local and medical authorities, and stay as much as possible at home. Respect the advice for social distancing.

- ❖ Pregnant women with thyroid diseases should adjust their levothyroxine dosage according to the recommendations of their doctor and follow the current instructions “stay at home” to protect themselves and the baby.
- ❖ Patients treated with corticosteroids due to subacute thyroiditis or due to Graves’ Ophthalmopathy or for any other illness concomitant with their thyroid disease are considered at high risk.
- ❖ We strongly advise all patients, follow a healthy lifestyle, to follow or adopt a healthy diet, to get sufficient sleep, and to quit smoking. Proper nutrition and hydration strengthen the immune system and lower the risk of infectious diseases.
- ❖ International Thyroid Federation, please see link below, which is affiliated with the ETA, will be happy to provide further information and, if wished, respond to patients’ questions.

5 April 2020, The Public Health Board

#### **Useful links**

International Thyroid Federation: [www.thyroid-fed.org](http://www.thyroid-fed.org)

European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) [www.euro-endo.org](http://www.euro-endo.org)