The Thyroid Foundation of Canada has 3 goals: to promote awareness and education about thyroid disease, to lend moral support to thyroid patients and their families, and to raise funds for much needed thyroid disease research.

**There are four common thyroid disorders or diseases:**

**Hypothyroidism**
- Occurs 5 times more commonly in women than in men.
- May cause many different symptoms, some of which may have other causes.
- Watch for *newly developed* symptoms such as: cold intolerance of the core body, excessive head hair loss (more than 50 pieces per day), and *unexplained* weight gain, fatigue, spontaneous muscle cramps (“Charlie horses”) more than once per week not related to exercise, lack of libido in men, irregular menstrual cycles in women, mental lethargy, increased need for sleep and constipation.
- Sometimes the thyroid gland is enlarged.
- Global prevalence of diagnosed hypothyroidism: approximately 350 million people. Another 350 million people have the disease but are not diagnosed.
- The most common cause is Hashimoto’s autoimmune thyroiditis – see below.

**Thyrotoxicosis**
- Nearly all cases are caused by Hashimoto’s autoimmune thyroiditis.
- The most helpful symptoms are *newly developed* unexplained weight loss - often in spite of an increase in appetite, heat intolerance, shortness of breath - especially on physical activity, irritability and short temper, more frequent bowel movements, difficulty climbing stairs because of muscle weakness, palpitations and tremors.
- Sometimes the thyroid gland is enlarged.

**Thyroid nodules**
- Very common, occur in as many as 50% of people over age 50.
- Nearly always benign, but cause anxiety as they might be due to cancer.

**Thyroid cancer**
- The fastest growing cancer being detected.
- There are 5 types, two of which, papillary and follicular, are quite common and have an excellent outlook if properly treated. Papillary is the most common type.

**Hashimoto’s autoimmune thyroiditis**
- An inherited condition discovered in 1912.
- It is estimated to occur in 10% of women and 2% of men and is a *condition*, not a *disease*.
- It causes no symptoms or signs unless it attacks the thyroid gland, and occasionally the eyes, because of antibodies directed at the thyroid in excessive amounts.
- Approximately half of individuals with Hashimoto's autoimmune thyroiditis develop hypothyroidism, thyrotoxicosis, a goitre, thyroid eye disease, or a combination of the four disorders.
- Papillary thyroid cancer occurs more commonly in Hashimoto’s autoimmune thyroiditis.

Find out more about these conditions at **www.thyroid.ca**