

Patient information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS: [Changes to prescribing of liothyronine](#)

The NHS is asking prescribers to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some medicines. This is because the medicines are:

- Not as safe as other medicines OR
- Not as good (effective) as other medicines OR
- More expensive than other medicines that do the same thing.

This includes liothyronine.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

[What is liothyronine?](#)

Liothyronine (sometimes known as T3) is used to treat an underactive thyroid gland. “Underactive” means that the thyroid gland does not work as well as it should.

However, the recommended treatment for an underactive thyroid gland is a medicine called levothyroxine. Levothyroxine is changed to liothyronine in the body.

[What is this change and what is the reason for it?](#)

There is not enough evidence to routinely use liothyronine in the treatment of an underactive thyroid gland, whereas there is a lot of evidence for the use of levothyroxine.

The British Thyroid Association (BTA) do not recommend routinely using liothyronine instead of levothyroxine in most patients with an underactive thyroid. However, they do say that a small number of patients treated with levothyroxine continue to suffer with symptoms and in these cases liothyronine may be considered.

In addition, liothyronine is extremely expensive, so it is not good value for money for most people with an underactive thyroid.

What options are available instead of liothyronine

People who are currently prescribed liothyronine will be reviewed by a consultant NHS endocrinologist to consider a switch to levothyroxine.

In exceptional (rare) cases, where levothyroxine has not worked and in line with the BTA guidance, a consultant endocrinologist may recommend liothyronine for individual patients after a three-month trial of treatment.

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP, or the person who prescribed the medication to you.
- British Thyroid Foundation: <https://www.btf-thyroid.org/hypothyroidism-leaflet>
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ o
- Healthwatch is an online resource where you can feedback on your healthcare experiences: www.healthwatch.co.uk

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed>