Goiters - Iodine Deficiency/Core Problem

Tammy: Carol, I have a friend with a very large swelling on the lower part of his neck. Maybe you have seen a person with this same very large swelling? I always wondered what caused this strange condition, and whether or not it could be prevented or treated.

Carol: Tammy, I've seen someone with this condition. We call it a goiter. Sometimes, because it's such a strange growth, a goiter might be mistaken for cancer. In most cases it's not. It's still something to take seriously though. Let's find out what a goiter is, what might cause it, what kind of symptoms you might have with a goiter, and then we'll talk about how to prevent it or treat it.

Tammy: We often talk about good food on Women of Hope don't we?

Carol: Oh my goodness! A lot!

Tammy: I love to eat. I really, really do. And I like different things. At our house you can wind up with German food, Mexican food, and Asian food. We just have everything!

Carol: And you know in a lot of families food is the language of love. They just always bring it out when the families are together.

Tammy: If you love me, make me brownies!

Sometimes, when we talk about our food, we talk about the minerals that are in our food. Minerals are found in the earth – the soil – and the rocks. So, what are soil and rocks doing in our food?

Well, our bodies are made up of minerals and we need those minerals. In fact, if we don't have enough minerals in our bodies we can't even take in the vitamins from our food, and we might become very sick.

Carol: So what you're saying is this; we need the vitamins that are in our food, but without minerals, our bodies can't process those vitamins!

Tammy: Exactly**.** There are several minerals that our bodies need to stay healthy. We've talked before about the mineral, iron. We said that iron is found in foods like beans, meat - especially red

meat, eggs, nuts and seeds, and in dark green leafy vegetables.

And we also said that iron makes up the part of our red blood cells that carries oxygen to all the cells of our body so it's *very* important.

Carol: *Iodine* is another very important mineral that our bodies need. If a person does not have enough iodine in their body, they might develop a goiter – that swelling in the neck that we talked about.

You see, in the lower part of the neck is a special gland, called the thyroid gland that works to help change the food we eat into energy, and it helps to keep our body at the right temperature. When this gland is working too hard because there isn't enough iodine in the body, the neck swells up to become a goiter. Too little iodine in the body can cause different illnesses; goiter is just one that's very easy to notice.

Tammy: Our bodies store iodine, but when the body's stores of iodine are empty that's when this big swelling, or goiter might grow. So, a low level of iodine in the soil...and in our food...is the most common cause in the world of an enlarged thyroid gland...a goiter.

Tammy: Welcome back to Women of Hope. Today we're talking about what causes a goiter – that large swelling in the lower part of the neck. We said that the most common cause in the world is low iodine – in the soil, and so in our food.

Carol: Let's talk about some of the signs that you might notice if your body is low in iodine? That special gland in our next that we talked about - the thyroid – produces a hormone helps us turn our food into energy, so someone without enough iodine...our thyroid gland is underactive... and we might feel very tired and weak. Our thyroid gland also helps our body stay at the right temperature. So, if it's not working well, you might often feel cold... fell a little moody or depressed...and maybe a bit forgetful. Your skin might become dry and a bit swollen and you might also get constipated easily and put on weight. Fertility can be affected so it might be harder to conceive a baby.

Tammy: I think it's important to mention the possible symptoms for an *overactive* thyroid too...you might feel nervous and need to be active all the time. You might sweat a lot and have heart palpitations. You might feel hungry and need to eat more – but you don't put on weight. In fact you

might *lose* weight.

If you have any of these symptoms – of an underactive thyroid, or an overactive thyroid – it's important to go to your health worker or doctor. They will do some tests to find out why you feel the way you do.

Carol: If you are pregnant and you think you might be low in iodine, it's *very important* to see your health worker or doctor. So much is going on in your body and you need to stay healthy so that the baby inside you grows properly. The thyroid hormone is very important as the baby's organs are developing. So as your baby is growing you need to be sure you're getting enough nutrients, including iodine.

Tammy: Very low iodine at this time can affect the baby's brain and can even cause loss of hearing in the baby! And as children grow, they continue to need healthy food...with minerals including iodine. Even mild iodine deficiency in children can result in the child having learning difficulties. Or the child might not be interested in doing very much...they don't have a lot of energy. If the level of iodine in food is very low, a child can actually be *born* with an underactive thyroid. So if you're pregnant, ask your health worker about all this.

Carol: OK. So, let's talk about what foods will give us iodine. Foods from the sea like seaweed and fish are an excellent source of iodine.

Tammy: Yogurt, cow's milk, eggs are a good source... AND fruits, such as strawberries, pineapple, mango…

Carol: or coconut, bitter melon (or bitter gourd), apricots, and dates. Rhubarb and don't forget the dark leafy vegetables such as spinach – all have iodine too.

Tammy: One good thing is that some of these – such as the apricots, dates and spinach - are also good sources of the *iron* we talked about. You'll get a lot of what your body needs by eating these foods. We've said it often before but it's worth repeating... the best way to get all the vitamins and minerals you need from your food, including enough iodine, is to eat a variety of different foods if you possibly can.

Carol: If there's enough iodine in the soil where you live, vegetables and fruits grown in that soil will

contain iodine. Sometimes fertilizers, which improve the soil for growing, can help to improve the iodine content.

Not all areas have a good supply of iodine in the soil, so in some countries we add Iodine to table salt. Next time you go to the store, or the market, check and see if you can buy salt with iodine. Iodized salt may cost a little more than salt without iodine but it's certainly worth the money!

Tammy: But let me stress, You don't need to increase the salt you eat, but every time you cook with salt or add it to your food, be sure it's iodized salt, if you can get it. Even better, if you can buy sea salt or rock salt it will contain iodine and many other minerals that your body needs. It might not be white – but will be a bit grey or pink. That's good as it has not been refined and had the minerals taken out.

Carol: If someone already has a goiter, what kind of treatment do they need? A goiter on the neck shows that the problem of too little iodine has been going on for a long time. However, a person can still be low in iodine without the goiter showing up yet. That's why it's important for us to get enough iodine in our foods.

Tammy: Our necks do more than just to hold up our heads don't they! They also hold our *trachea...our* windpipe*,* that's what allows us to breathe, and our *esophagus* that carries our food to our stomach. If a goiter gets too big it can press on these and make it hard to breathe or swallow properly. But you will not need treatment unless the goiter is large and causes problems.

Carol: An old, hard goiter may need to be removed with surgery. But a goiter can often go away when we begin to take in enough iodine in our food.

It's true that goiters can occur for many other reasons, but remember iodine deficiency is the most common. So let's make sure that we all get enough iodine in our bodies.

Tammy tell us about your friend, Sally. You'll find this story very interesting as Sally had something very unusual growing *inside her house*... No – it was not a goiter!

Tammy: Sally was walking down the passage at home one day when she noticed something funny - there were *mushrooms* growing in the carpet!! Seriously - four or five mushrooms had popped up overnight and there they were!

So, she cleaned them up, gave the wall and the carpet a wipe over, and thought that was the end of the matter. But the next day - there they were *again*! This time she realized that the carpet was really wet, so she cleaned up the mushrooms and dried the carpet. It all looked good...for a while. But, a few days later - there they were *again*!

It was then she realized...she had a bigger problem. You see, behind the wall where the mushrooms were growing was her shower. And the water from the shower was leaking into the wall. In the end she and her husband had to pull off the plaster and fix the leak. Sally said, “Our core problem was not the mushrooms - it was the leaking pipe! And until we took care of the *core problem*, the mushrooms were going to continue to grow.”

Carol: Sometimes you and I try to deal with the ‘mushrooms’ in our lives. You know, the surface problems, like our temper, or a problem with a friend...or even *apathy* – that’s when we have no interest in things or people around us. And most of us feel jealous of others sometimes. But we don't look past these surface problems...to the *real problem . . .the core problem*.

My core problem, and yours, is that we choose our *own* way over God's way. We want to serve our *own* purposes instead of God’s purposes. And friend, the Bible calls that *sin*. Sin is when we choose to go our *own* way, set our *own* limits, make up our *own* rules.

When Jesus died and rose again he won the battle against death. He paid the penalty. The *penalty* for sin is death, which is eternal separation from God and all that he is - his love, mercy, grace, kindness, forgiveness. All of that out of reach forever.

He also broke the *power* of sin. When we sin, we get caught up in it. Each time we choose our own way, sin tightens its grip on us and it’s harder and harder to walk away from it. But Jesus broke the *power* of sin. And he made it possible for you and me to also break free.

Unfortunately we will never be totally free of sin - at least, not in *this* life. But here's the wonderful promise - one day, we will be free from the *presence* of sin! Can you imagine - no more death...no more crying...no pain...no fear...no sickness. These are all consequences of living in a sin-infested world. And one day we can be free of all of that! Jesus' death and resurrection means we can be free from the *penalty*, the *power* and - one day - the *presence* of sin.

Tammy: I love what the Bible, God's word, has to say about this 'core problem' ...sin.

In Romans chapter 3 verse 23: it says '...everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence.' (GNT)

Carol: Paul, the follower of God, was explaining to the people that it doesn't matter who we are, where we live, or whose ideas we follow, we are all – every one of us - far away from God because of this core problem – sin.

Tammy: So what can we do about it?

Let me read to you again from the Bible. This time I am looking at first John Chapter 1 verse 9. But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive our sins and purify us, make us clean, from all our wrongdoing.' (GNT)

Carol: So, what happens after we confess – or tell God that we have sinned...that we have done things that are not pleasing to God? His word says, 'he will forgive our sins and purify us – make us clean – from all our wrongdoing.'

How amazing is that? – That is a promise from God.

Tammy: And that promise from God can affect our lives! In Romans again, chapter 4 verse 7, the Bible says: 'Oh what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight.' (NLT)

Carol: God chooses not to look at our sin. He puts them out of his sight. Instead of looking at our sin, he looks at the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and he sees us as *new* and *clean*.

Tammy: So our core problem, was it the 'mushrooms'? Those surface things like our temper, our nasty words, or ignoring what someone else's needs? No – the core problem was the leaking pipe that made the carpet wet – and made the mushrooms grow. That leaking pipe is just like our sin that makes us disobey God and do the things that hurt his heart.

Carol: Those special verses from God's word told us how we can deal with our core problem!

Jesus died on *your* behalf. He paid *your* penalty, so that you don't need to ever be separated from God.

He offers to free you from the *power of sin*, as you walk with him and ask him to help you. And you can live, knowing that one day you will be free from the *presence* of sin...you will never have to feel sin's effects ever again!

Jesus makes the offer - but you need to accept it. Will you talk to him about your core problem today?

Join me if you would like to speak to God...

Father God, thank you for sending Jesus, your son, to give his life for us – so that we can be forgiven...be clean...and brought back to you. Thank you for your promise of life with you forever. Amen

Tammy: Before we go today I would like to share a letter that a listener to Women of Hope sent some time ago. She heard the message of Jesus Christ and discovered what her *core problem* was – that she needed to confess her sins to God and trust Jesus. This is what she wrote:

'I am 43 years old. I have five children. I like to listen to the radio every day. One day I turned on the radio and looked for a different station and the Women of Hope program was on. Now I listen to Women of Hope every week and my husband and children listen in as well. Six months ago my husband and three of my children came to believe in Jesus too - through listening to the radio program. Now I open my very small hut and tell people about Jesus and we worship the Lord together every week.

It is a joy for me to listen to Women of Hope, because it teaches us women how to take care of ourselves and learn how to be a good woman and have good habits. This program will help the next generation to learn how to do good things. Every time we listen to the program, we discuss among ourselves what we learned that day.

Before I believed in Jesus, my life was so lonely and I was so depressed. Now that I am a Christian, the Lord has given me a lot of strength and I am very happy. I have complete trust in the Lord. Sometimes people criticize me, but I am not upset with them, because I want them to know Jesus too.

Carol: This lady has not only turned to Jesus Christ, but she is keen to share her faith and tell others about him. That's what he asks us to do. That's why we love to share God's word with *you* on Women

of Hope.

Let me share another story. This listener has also found hope in her life:

Hello. I have 4 children. I received Jesus to be my Lord many years ago. Throughout my life I never had much happiness because life is so hard and I am very busy taking care of household chores and providing for my family. There are no paid jobs available for me. I have to struggle daily in order for my family and me to survive. But as a Christian, I have hope in my God to provide for our needs. I know that the Lord has a plan for my life and a good plan for my family too. A good thing that gives me hope and happiness is the Women of Hope program. I have been listening to this program every week and it has encouraged me tremendously. These days I serve the Lord in my church with the women's group. Please remember me in your prayers.

Tammy: We pray often for those who listen to Women of Hope and we pray that today you will find *hope* in Jesus Christ as you learn to trust him. If you have prayed the prayer today and have any questions or would just like to write to us, we would love to hear from you. You can write to us in care of this station or at TWR Women of Hope. The email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. Or if you missed a program or want to hear one again visit our website TWRWomenofHope.org or visit our Facebook page.

We look forward to our time together again soon. May God bless you.

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