

# Thyroid Labs Cheat Sheet

Individual numbers mean far less than the combination. Here are the patterns your provider looks at when reading TSH alongside your Free T4 and Free T3.

| TSH          | FREE T4 / T3        | WHAT IT USUALLY SUGGESTS                  |
|--------------|---------------------|---|
| High         | Low Free T4         | <b>Overt hypothyroidism</b> (underactive) |
| High         | Normal Free T4      | <b>SUBCLINICAL Hypothyroidism</b>         |
| Low          | High Free T4 / T3   | <b>Hyperthyroidism</b> (overactive)       |
| Low          | Normal Free T4 / T3 | <b>SUBCLINICAL Hyperthyroidism</b>        |
| Low / normal | Low Free T4         | <b>Possible central</b> (pituitary) cause |
| Normal       | Normal              | <b>Thyroid function likely normal</b>     |

## A quick word on “subclinical”

This means your TSH is out of range but your actual thyroid hormone (Free T4) is still normal, often with few or no symptoms. It's common, especially in women and as we age, and it doesn't automatically mean medication. Treatment is more likely when TSH is above 10 mIU/L, when your cholesterol panel is also off, when you have symptoms, or when you're planning a pregnancy.

### ONE VALUE ISN'T A DIAGNOSIS

Providers look at trends over time and how the numbers fit together.

### RANGES VARY BY LAB

Always read against your own lab's reference range, not a number online.

### SYMPTOMS COUNT TOO

How you feel is real data. It matters as much as the numbers.