

Michel, 52, UK

I suffered from thyroid disorder for a year and a half before I was diagnosed. My symptoms included a tremor in my hands and swollen eyes. These symptoms were really distressing and made me extremely depressed. I also suffered from loss of memory which affected my concentration and a loss of strength in my muscles which prevented me from doing DIY around the house which I was very passionate about. I also felt constantly tired.

I couldn't speak to my family or friends as I found it hard to talk about my symptoms. I kept putting off going to the doctor until eventually my symptoms got worse. I am not the sort of person who would go to my GP unless it was serious. However, my husband said that he did not recognise me anymore and urged me to go immediately. I knew that something was wrong with my body as I was continually hungry and shortly after each meal I would need to go to the loo. I also started to experience palpitations so I visited my GP.

I first attributed my symptoms to old age. However, when I saw my GP, I explained my symptoms and said that my severe palpitations were getting worse. My GP did a blood test and received the results the same day. I was put on medication straight away to avoid a heart attack. Further tests were undertaken and hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid) was diagnosed. My GP told me that my hyperthyroidism was making me feel hungry all the time as it was speeding up my metabolism. I first was given radioactive treatment to reduce the activity of my thyroid gland and because a growth was found on it. This did not solve the problem so the doctors removed three quarters of my thyroid. However, they then found that I had a tumour on my remaining thyroid.

Now, I don't have a thyroid and have to take levothyroxine (synthetically produced thyroid hormone) for the rest of my life. Although, my symptoms are now under control, I suffer from a legacy of depression.