

# Endocrinology

The study of hormones



The thyroid helps control how the body reacts to other hormones

**E**ndocrinology is the study of hormones. At its simplest, a hormone is a chemical messenger from one cell, or group of cells, to another. Hormones are released (secreted) and have an effect on other parts of the body. Hormones are found in organisms with more than one cell, and are therefore found in all plants and animals.

## **Why is endocrinology important?**

Hormones influence or control a wide range of physiological activities, such as growth, puberty, sugar regulation and appetite. Problems with hormones and the way they work contribute to some of the major diseases of mankind. These include diabetes, thyroid conditions, some sexual problems, appetite and obesity and cancer. Endocrinologists work to understand hormone function and treat these conditions.

## **How do I get into endocrinology?**

Currently, there isn't an undergraduate degree course in endocrinology and so those working within the field arrived there through a variety of routes.

For example, a degree in medicine allows you to specialise in endocrinology and then follow a clinical academic pathway. Alternatively, you might complete an undergraduate degree in a biological science and then carry out postgraduate and postdoctoral research in endocrinology.

## **What can I do with endocrinology?**

Endocrinology encompasses many areas of our life and work. Endocrinologists are employed as drug developers in the pharmaceutical industry, or as toxicologists, academic researchers, laboratory researchers, nurses, vets, doctors, environmentalists or clinical biochemists.

## **Where can I find out more?**

The Society for Endocrinology provides information on endocrinology and endocrine careers.

● [www.endocrinology.org](http://www.endocrinology.org)

More general information about hormones and endocrine science can be found at the Society for Endocrinology's You and Your Hormones website.

● [www.yourhormones.info](http://www.yourhormones.info)