

Signs and Symptoms:

Small thyroid nodules typically do not cause symptoms. However, larger nodules can press on structures in the neck, and cause:

- *Breathing problems
- *Swallowing problems
- *Changes in the sound
- *Discomfort due to a feeling of fullness in the neck

We call all of these symptoms “pressure symptoms”; Having compression symptoms usually requires surgical removal of that part of the thyroid. In overactive “toxic” thyroid nodules, there may be signs of hyperthyroidism in addition to the neck findings described.

Risk factors:

Risk factors for solid thyroid nodules include increased age, living in iodine-deficient areas, and smoking. Nodules harboring thyroid cancer are more common in men, more likely with increased age, and may be associated with childhood radiation and smoking exposure. Most thyroid cancers are sporadic (not associated with a genetic condition) but there are some thyroid cancers that can be genetically inherited.