

What is Calcitonin?

Calcitonin is a hormone produced and released by C cells in the thyroid gland. Calcitonin works to control calcium and potassium levels. It does this by inhibiting the activity of osteoclasts, which are cells that break down bone. The secretion of this hormone is directly controlled by the calcium levels in the blood. When levels begin to increase, the body responds with increased levels of calcitonin. When calcium levels drop, calcitonin levels also drop.

What can go wrong with calcitonin?

Calcitonin is a unique hormone for the importance of which is not well known. Patients who have their thyroid removed have almost no calcitonin levels, but ultimately show no symptoms. However, high calcitonin levels may indicate a rare type of medullary thyroid cancer.