

The Australian  
Thyroid Foundation Ltd

**EMBARGOED UNTIL:** 5:00am, 1 June 2008

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## Australian women urged to get smart about protecting their baby's brain

Marking the start of Thyroid Awareness Week (1-7 June), the Australian Thyroid Foundation (ATF) is today urging all women who are considering pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding to get adequate levels of iodine in their diets to ensure the safe development of their unborn child.

Beverley Garside, President of the Australian Thyroid Foundation, believes all Australian women should be educated about the importance of maintaining correct iodine levels for both their own health and the health of their unborn child.

"Australian research shows that 50% of pregnant women are iodine deficient, which can affect the development of the foetal brain and lead to lower intelligence and learning difficulties," Ms Garside said.

"Low iodine levels are one of the most important health issues internationally for the IQ and health of children," she said.

Low iodine levels in the diet may result in a range of conditions known as iodine deficiency disorders (IDD). Iodine deficiency is becoming an increasingly common cause of thyroid health problems in Australia, particularly amongst young females and pregnant women.

"Thyroid cancer, hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, nodules and iodine deficiency disorder are some of the conditions developed as a result of inadequate dietary iodine levels. With one in seven Australians being diagnosed with some form of thyroid disease, a call to action is vital to ensure a healthy lifestyle," she said.

"This Thyroid Awareness Week, we are urging all Australian women to visit their doctor for a thyroid test and to seek advice about the need for iodine supplementation.

"Failure to conceive, miscarriages, low birth weight and lower IQ levels in children may well reflect reduced iodine in the diet of Australian women," she explained.

Thyroid Awareness Week is a forum to educate the Australian public, predominantly young pregnant women, about iodine deficiency, thyroid testing and the importance of iodine supplementation for the development of their unborn babies.

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### Media contacts:

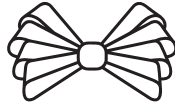
#### Talent available for interview include:

- **Beverley Garside**, President of the Australian Thyroid Foundation;
- **Professor Creswell Eastman AM**, Endocrinologist and Chief Medical Advisor of the Australian Thyroid Foundation;
- **Bree Amer**, thyroid cancer survivor, ATF Ambassador and television personality; and
- **Claire Hooper**, thyroid disease patient, ATF Ambassador and comedian.

#### To arrange an interview or for further information, please contact:

**Beverley Garside** – 0416 269 982

**Sally Cummine** – 0415 181 252 or 02 8281 3269



## The Australian Thyroid Foundation Ltd

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### **About the Australian Thyroid Foundation:**

The Australian Thyroid Foundation Ltd. (ATF) was founded in 1995 by a small group of people, all with thyroid conditions, who wanted to provide a support and education service to members and their families.

The ATF is a national not-for-profit organisation which provides many support services for its members and their families and is focused on educating the Australia public about the importance of good thyroid health.

The mission of The Australian Thyroid Foundation Limited is to provide support and educate members and the community about thyroid disease.

For further information, visit: [www.thyroidfoundation.com.au](http://www.thyroidfoundation.com.au)