What is the thyroid gland?
The thyroid gland located in the neck produces thyroid hormones which help the body use energy, stay warm and keep the brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working normally.

What causes postpartum thyroiditis?
Postpartum thyroiditis is the result of rapid damage to the thyroid caused by cells of the body's own immune system (autoimmune inflammation).

What is postpartum thyroiditis?
Postpartum thyroiditis is an inflammation of the thyroid that occurs in women after the delivery of a baby.

How is postpartum thyroiditis treated?
The thyrotoxic phase may be treated with beta blockers to decrease symptoms such as palpitations and tremors. As symptoms improve, the medication should be tapered and then stopped since the thyrotoxic phase is transient. Antithyroid medications (see Hyperthyroid brochure) are not used for the thyrotoxic phase since the thyroid is not overactive. The hypothyroid phase is often treated with thyroid hormone replacement (see Thyroid Hormone Therapy brochure). It is important to remember that an attempt to stop thyroid hormone may be made after 6-9 months, since 80% of patients will regain normal thyroid function and not require chronic therapy.

Further details on this and other thyroid-related topics are available in the patient information section on the American Thyroid Association® website at www.thyroid.org.