

conductive to rest. Increased metabolic rate may cause heat intolerance and increased food intake in these patients. Mood swings and irritability can disrupt relationships, creating difficulties within and outside the home. Nurses can help parents understand the medical reason for behavior changes and offer ways to minimize them. A school consultation is important to provide education and suggest ways to assist a child after diagnosis.

Nurses should know the side effects of antithyroid drug therapy, including urticarial rash, fever, arthralgias, vasculitis, liver dysfunction, and agranulocytosis. Lymphadenopathy, edema, and diminished taste can also occur. Parents must understand the signs of hypothyroidism, which can occur from overdose.

### Nursing Alert

Children being treated with propylthiouracil or methimazole must be carefully monitored for side effects of the drug. Because sore throat and fever accompany the grave complication of leukopenia, these children should be seen by a practitioner if such symptoms occur. Parents and children should be taught to recognize and report symptoms immediately.

### Nursing Alert

The earliest indication of hypoparathyroidism may be anxiety and mental depression followed by paresthesia and evidence of heightened neuromuscular excitability, such as:

**Chvostek sign:** Facial muscle spasm elicited by tapping the facial nerve in the region of the parotid gland

**Trousseau sign:** Carpal spasm elicited by pressure applied to nerves of the upper arm

**Tetany:** Carpopedal spasm (sharp flexion of wrist and ankle joints), muscle twitching, cramps, seizures, and stridor

## Disorders of Parathyroid Function

The parathyroid glands secrete **parathyroid hormone (PTH)**. Along