Anatomy and Development

The thyroid tissue originates in the floor of the primitive pharynx during the third week of gestation. During the development of the embryo, the tissue migrates from the foramen cecum, along the thyroglossal duct, to its final position in the neck. The mature thyroid gland can be found anterior to the trachea, between the cricoid cartilage and suprasternal notch. It is comprised of two lateral lobes, connected by a central isthmus. Normally, the four parathyroid glands are located posterior to each pole of the thyroid gland. The inferior and superior parathyroids arise from the third and fourth branchial pouches respectively. The recurrent laryngeal nerves course along the lateral aspect of each thyroid lobe. The mature gland is comprised of a large number of spherical follicles, which consist of a central colloid core surrounded by colloid-secreting follicular cells. The proteinaceous colloid core contains abundant thyroglobulin, the precursor of the thyroid hormones.

References: