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Prostate Health

The prostate gland is unique to men. It is a doughnut shaped gland that surrounds the urethra (which passes urine and semen through it), located below the bladder in the pelvis. When healthy, the prostate gland is approximately the size of a walnut. The prostate secretes a fluid that increases sperm function making it important for fertility, and decreases the risk of urinary tract infections in men by lubricating the urethra.

Prostate health is one area that Naturopathic Medicine has been very well researched. There are a number of natural therapies that have been shown to be very effective for treating conditions of the prostate, including prostate cancer. An individual regime can be chosen for you by your ND.

Three conditions affecting the prostate are prostatitis, benign prostatic hypertrophy and prostate cancer, described more fully below.

Prostatitis

This is an acute or chronic infection of the prostate gland. It can be caused by bacteria, or other causes that are not fully understood. Symptoms include painful and frequent urination, fever, chills and lower back pain.

Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH)

Commonly known as BPH, this is non-malignant enlargement of the prostate gland. When the prostate is enlarged it can pinch the urethra causing symptoms of bladder obstruction, difficulty emptying the bladder, hesitancy when initiating urination, and weak urine stream. With age, there is a shift in hormones resulting in increased levels of dihydrotestosterone and estrogen in men. Therefore after the age of 40, men have an increased risk of developing BPH. Having BPH does not necessarily increase the risk of developing prostate cancer.

Dietary Tips to a Healthy Prostate

- Avoid pesticides
- Eat zinc-rich foods
- Adequate intake of essential fatty acids
- Keep cholesterol levels low to ensure proper circulation

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer and BPH symptoms are very similar; thus, PSA measurements are taken to distinguish between them. Because prostate cancer usually occurs in the posterior lobe of the prostate gland, it can often be found on rectal examination. However, please be aware that a digital rectal exam is not definitive.

Newsflash

Parking: For the month of December there is free 2-hour parking downtown (see Caroline St. meters)

MASSAGE THERAPIST WANTED

We are looking to rent a room in our clinic to a registered massage therapist in the new year. Contact 905-528-1661 for more details.

Holiday Hours & On-Call

The clinic will be closed Sat Dec 23rd and reopen on Tues Jan 2nd. We will be checking messages daily during this period, and emergency appointments will be available.

Humulus lupulus (Hops used to make beer) is estrogenic, causing enlargement of the prostate gland. So yes, men, this means you need to watch all that beer you drink as the hops can stimulate prostate gland enlargement.

Easy Lemon Chicken

- 1 cup low-fat sour cream
 - 1 Tbsp minced fresh dill
 - 1 tsp lemon pepper seasoning
 - 1 tsp lemon zest (grated peel)
 - 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
1. Preheat oven to 450 °C.
 2. Combine all ingredients except chicken in a small bowl.
 3. Spray medium casserole dish with olive oil. Spoon ¼ of lemon-dill sauce over the bottom of the dish. Arrange chicken breasts on top in a single layer. Pour remaining sauce over chicken. Spread evenly.
 4. Bake uncovered for 30-35 minutes, until chicken is tender and no longer pink.



Erectile Dysfunction

The term erectile dysfunction accounts for many causes that culminate in a male's inability to produce or maintain an erection. A recent Canadian study revealed that almost 30% of sexually active males surveyed experience erectile dysfunction, and in many cases this condition had a large impact on their lives. Approximately twenty-five percent of these men consulted a physician about this condition, and those who did noted an improvement in their condition and satisfaction in how their health care professional approached the issue. Erectile dysfunction can be caused by a variety of factors, and thus there are several ways in which it can be treated.

Causes of erectile dysfunction are often divided into two categories; organic (a physical cause) and psychological (a mental/emotional cause).

Organic causes:

- Insufficient blood flow to penis
- Side effects of other disorders or prescription medications
- Alcohol and tobacco use
- Trauma to male sexual organs

Psychological causes:

- Stress
- Performance anxiety
- Depression
- Psychiatric illness

In approximately 90% of men over the age of 50, erectile dysfunction is due to organic causes. Erectile dysfunction resulting from organic or psychological origins may be diagnosed using answers to simple questions and a range of noninvasive tests.

Herbs for Men



Serenoa repens

Serenoa repens, known as Saw Palmetto, is commonly used to treat the prostate gland. *Serenoa repens* is best taken as an ethanol decoction, where higher ethanol percentages ensure better quality.

It is used to treat inflammation of the genitourinary tract, benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), excess testosterone, and prostate cancer.

There have been numerous clinical trials performed to determine *Serenoa's* mechanism of action. It has been shown to reduce BPH symptoms and increase urinary flow. Other experimental outcome measures include residual urinary volume after voiding and change in prostate size. It is known to be anti-estrogenic, inhibits androgen binding, is anti-inflammatory and relaxes nerves (i.e., spasmolytic).

There are no known contraindications for using this herb. *Please note* long term use of this herb may result in gastrointestinal disturbances, such as nausea and stomach upset.

Turnera aphrodisiaca

Turnera aphrodisiaca or Damiana is typically used for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), male infertility, impotence, prostatic inflammation and prostate cancer. *Turnera* is a nerve tonic, meaning it relaxes the nerves, and tends to specifically target reproductive system, both in males and females.

Unfortunately there is very little research on this herb and the mechanism of action is yet to be determined.

Turnera aphrodisiaca can be taken as a tea or in tincture form and can be combined with other herbs by your Naturopathic doctor in a unique formula made specifically for you. *Turnera* is safe for most people long term; however, it may interfere with hypoglycemic medications and should be used in caution in diabetics.

Zinc

Zinc is vastly important for male reproductive health. It has been shown to decrease the size of the prostate gland. Zinc absorption is decreased by estrogens, so is therefore important in men experiencing BPH or prostate cancer as they have higher estrogen levels. Zinc inhibits 5-alpha reductase (the enzyme that irreversibly converts testosterone to dihydrotestosterone).

One great source of zinc is pumpkin seeds (*Cucurbita pepo*), and it is also found in seafood. Zinc is an important co-factor for proper cell differentiation, thus, male sperm fertility. Coffee will impede zinc absorption, while excess zinc supplementation will inhibit copper absorption. Please consult your naturopathic doctor for further nutritional advice regarding prostate health.

Naturopathic Perspectives
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