



Hey Guys! Is Your "Plumbing" Working Properly?

Or, are you one of the millions of men who suffer from prostate problems?

If you're between 50 and 60, there's a 50-50 chance you suffer from benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a condition where the prostate becomes enlarged, compressing the urethra and making urination difficult and sometimes even painful. By the time a man is 80, his chance of having BPH is the same as his age, 80%.

Symptoms of BPH include:

- Difficulty starting urination (hesitancy and straining)
- Weak urine stream and dribbling after urination
- Feeling that the bladder is not completely empty
- Frequent urge to urinate (even soon after urinating)
- Pain during urination
- Waking at night to urinate
- A sudden, uncontrollable urge to urinate

These symptoms are not always related to BPH and can also be caused by urinary tract infections, inflammation of the prostate (prostatitis), prostate cancer and other diseases. So, if you have symptoms of "plumbing problems" like these, you should get a proper medical diagnosis to determine the precise nature of the problem you are dealing with. Once you have a proper diagnosis, you can determine what your options are, some of which we will discuss in this newsletter.

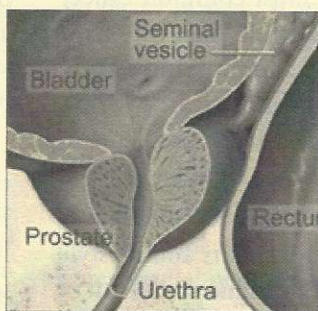
About the Prostate

Before we discuss natural remedies for the prostate, let's take a closer look at this gland and its functions. We'll also take a closer look at some of the prostate problems men can experience.

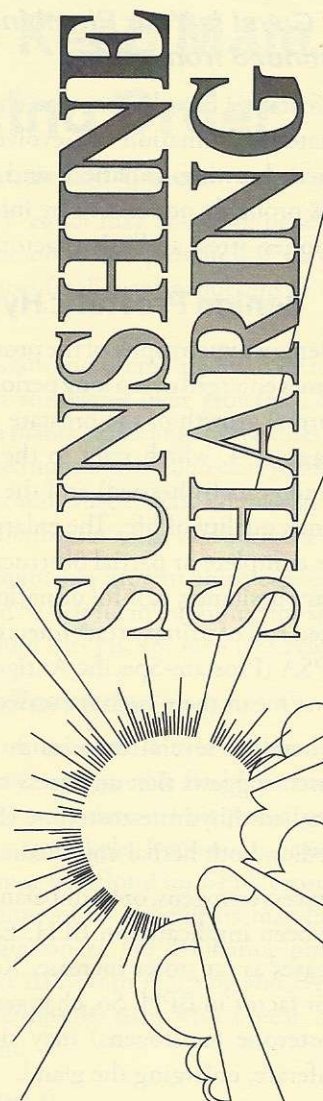
For starters, the prostate gland is a secondary sex gland found only in males. This small doughnut shaped gland encircles the urethra at the base of the bladder. The urethra is the tube that drains urine from the bladder, as shown in the illustration on the right.

The three most common problems men have with this gland are prostatitis, BPH and prostate cancer. Acute prostatitis is fairly common in men of all ages. It is the inflammation of the prostate gland. Symptoms include problems with the flow of urine, burning urination, pain between the scrotum and rectum, fever, and blood or pus in the urine.

Usually this condition starts with a bacterial infection elsewhere in the body that migrates to the prostate. When the infection settles into the prostate and the prostate begins to swell and put pressure on the urethra, the flow of urine is slowed and can often back up. This causes the bladder to distend, become tender, and provides an excellent breeding place for further bacterial infections. Left long enough, the infection can spread to the kidneys and do damage. So remedies to fight the infection, such as antibiotics or antibacterial herbs, are essential to recovery.



Continued on page 2



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Your guide to better health the natural way.

Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

Sunshine Sharing is an independent educational publication and receives no financial support from any herb or health product manufacturer. Your comments, questions and personal experiences are welcome. Send them to *Sunshine Sharing*, P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791-1239 or comments@treelite.com.

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Hey Guys! Is Your Plumbing Working Properly?

Continued from page 1

Prostatitis can also become chronic. Symptoms of chronic prostate inflammation can evolve to include: low back ache, frequent burning urination, and impotence. Chronic prostatitis is probably not caused by infection and may be related to hormones, stress and other factors.

Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH)

Benign hypertrophy of the prostate occurs when the prostate becomes enlarged over a long period of time. This nonmalignant, abnormal growth of the prostate tissue is measured in severity in stages 1-4, which refer to the size of the growth (walnut-sized to grapefruit-sized) and the impact this enlargement has on one's quality of life. The enlargement of prostate tissue can cause complete or partial obstruction of the urethra leading to urinary hesitancy, painful urination, frequent urination and increased risk of urinary tract infections. Having BPH can elevate the PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) test but fortunately BPH doesn't mean there is an increased risk of cancer.

There are several theories as to the cause of BPH. Some research suggests that an excess of a special form of testosterone called dihydrotestosterone (DHT) is to blame and many remedies, both herbal and medical, focus on this issue.

Excess estrogens, or an imbalance of estrogens and androgens, have been implicated in BPH. Estrogen production naturally increases as fat stores increase. Xenoestrogens may also play a major factor in BPH. So, changes in the ratio of estrogens and testosterone (androgens) may signal cells in the prostate to proliferate, enlarging the gland.

Prostate Cancer

Cancer of the prostate is the third most common cancer in men. Cancer seems to be more prevalent in men who have a history of sexually transmitted diseases and prostatitis. Early symptoms of cancer are the same as for prostatitis. Medical examination is required to determine if urinary problems in men are due to prostate cancer, prostatitis or BPH.

Prostate cancer is a more serious issue and will not be addressed here. However, some of the supplements and lifestyle changes mentioned in this newsletter may reduce your risk of prostate cancer and even aid in recovery when used as part of a comprehensive program.

Now that we understand the major problems that affect the prostate, let's review some basic guidelines for maintaining prostate health.

Nutrition for Prostate Health

A diet high in fruits and vegetables has been linked to a lower risk of all kinds of cancer. Prostate cancer rates are highest in countries where the typical diet is high in saturated fat. Eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids may also reduce cancer risk.

Zinc is quite possibly the most important nutrient for men who are sexually active. Each time a man ejaculates, zinc is lost. Low zinc levels have been linked to prostatitis and may also be involved in BPH. Zinc has been found to be a potent inhibitor of 5 α -reductase, the enzyme that converts testosterone to DHT. A reasonable dose of zinc for inhibiting BPH would be 50 mg daily with an added 2 mg of copper.

Lycopene, a red pigment found in tomatoes, watermelon, and shrimp, is well researched as a means of stopping the growth of prostate cancer cells. When foods containing lycopene are consumed over a number of years, lycopene accumulates in the nucleus of the cells lining the prostate and triggers apoptosis, also known as cell death, in cancerous cells.

Flax Seed Oil with Lignans can have protective benefits for the prostate. Lignans are naturally occurring isoflavones (aka phytoestrogens) found in a variety of plants. Some of the lignans in flaxseed are converted to the absorbable compounds enterodiol and enterolactone in the intestine. These substances appear to exert beneficial effects on the prostate, both in terms of reduced risk for BPH and cancer prevention. A study published in the June 2008 issue of *Journal of Medicinal Food* showed improvement of BPH symptoms in men taking 300 to 600 mg. of flax lignans per day for four months.

Avoid grapefruit as this inhibits estrogen breakdown. Beer should also be avoided, as the hops in beer is also estrogenic. In fact, alcoholic beverages in general should be avoided if you have prostate problems, with the possible exception of red wine. Research suggests that resveratrol, a key ingredient in red wine and a powerful antioxidant, may be beneficial to your health.

Pumpkin seeds are a rich source of zinc and magnesium and have also been used to help prostate problems in men. There are also a number of herbs, herbal formulas and supplements that may be helpful for your prostate. A list of some of these can be found on the next page.

Exercise

Regular exercise can improve your prostate health. Recent research has suggested venous stagnation may be a cause of BPH. Enlargement of the prostate is associated with a sedentary lifestyle and is more common in men with desk jobs and those who sit for long periods of time like truck drivers. Regular physical activity and pelvic floor exercises (kegel exercises) can be helpful in stimulating pelvic circulation. Exercise also helps with weight loss, which reduces estrogen levels.

Hydration

It is important to drink plenty of water to give the kidneys plenty of water to dilute toxins in. Because of the pain and difficulty in urinating or the frequent urges to urinate, a man may be tempted to drink less water. This will eventually make the problem even worse as it causes toxins in the urine to concentrate, irritating the bladder, prostate and urinary passages. It may even lead to the formation of bladder stones. A general rule is to take in 1/2 oz. for each pound of body weight daily.



Herbs and Supplements to Keep Male "Plumbing" in Good working Order

In addition to the foods and nutrients mentioned on page two, there are a number of single herbs, supplements and formulas that may be helpful for prostate problems. Here are a few of them.

Saw Palmetto

Traditionally used as a general tonic for aging men, saw palmetto is probably the best-known herb for the prostate. Containing compounds that inhibit the formation of DHT, saw palmetto has been shown to be helpful in mild to moderate cases of BPH and in relieving symptoms of prostatitis. It can improve urine flow rate, reduce nighttime urination, decrease pain and reduce prostate swelling. It does not cause sexual dysfunction like many prostate drugs, either.

Saw palmetto also acts as a digestive tonic, to improve digestion and assimilation in elderly men. For prostate enlargement and urinary problems in men, take 2 capsules of **Saw Palmetto** three times daily with meals. For **Saw Palmetto Concentrate**, the dose is 1 capsule with a meal twice daily. It is also an ingredient in Men's Formula and PS II, which will be discussed later.

Other Single Prostate Herbs

Pygeum is a South African evergreen tree that also has beneficial effects on the prostate. Slightly weaker than saw palmetto, it can relieve BPH symptoms of difficult urination, nighttime urination and incomplete emptying of the bladder. It has also been used to treat prostatitis and may help inhibit prostate cancer. It is an ingredient in Men's Formula.

Stinging nettle root has also been shown to improve urinary output and reduce cellular proliferation in state 1 and 2 BPH. The root weakly inhibits 5-alpha-reductase and the formation of DHT and also inhibits aromatase, the enzyme which converts testosterone to estradiol (a form of estrogen).

Equolibrium™

This supplement shows great promise as an effective natural remedy for BPH. It contains equol, a compound produced from daidzein, an isoflavone, by bacteria in the intestines. Some people produce equol naturally when eating foods from the legume family that contain daidzein. Daidzein is plentiful in soy beans, fava beans and kudzu, but is also found in peas, other beans and red clover.

Most drugs and herbs for BPH work by blocking the 5-alpha-reductase enzyme that converts testosterone to DHT. Unfortunately, this enzyme is also involved in numerous other body processes, so inhibiting it can have unwanted effects. Research shows equol has the ability to bind to DHT and block its ability to bond to receptor sites in the prostate and stimulate prostate growth. It also binds to certain types of estrogen receptors, which blocks the adverse effects of excess estrogens. It does all this without interfering with normal testosterone metabolism.

Equol's Effects on Prostatitis and Cancer

Besides helping with BPH, equol may also have benefits in reducing prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate). It may also reduce the risk of prostate cancer (malignant neoplasms or carcinoma of the prostate).

Cancers of the breast, prostate and uterus are often estrogen-dependent, meaning estrogen stimulates their growth. Certain phytoestrogen compounds in plants, including the flavones from soy and the lignans from flaxseed appear to bind to estrogen receptors and reduce the estrogen-stimulating effects. Equol may have this benefit. The dosage for Equolibration is one capsule twice daily.

One study suggested that equol may prevent breast cancer cells from proliferating, which could be helpful in inhibiting the spread of breast cancer. So, Equolibration isn't just for men (see below).

Men's Formula

Men's Formula is a blend of herbs and nutrients that can be helpful for prostate and general reproductive health in men. It contains 15 mg of zinc gluconate, saw palmetto fruit extract, pumpkin seed, pygeum bark extract, gotu kola, lycopene concentrate and stinging nettle extract. It may be helpful for BPH, prostatitis and impotency in men and some of its ingredients may have a protective effect against prostate cancer. For combating prostate problems, take 3 capsules twice daily with morning and evening meals. For maintenance, take 2 capsules daily with a meal. It can be combined with Equolibration.

PS II

This is a traditional herbal formula for BPH and urinary tract problems in men. It may be helpful for prostatitis and urinary

Continued on page 4

Attention Ladies

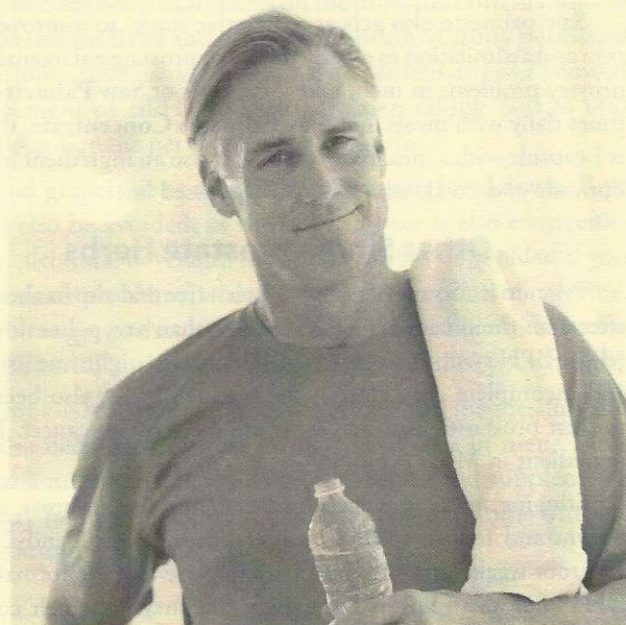
Equolibration isn't just for aging men. It may also have benefits for menopausal women. Two placebo controlled clinical trials giving equol as a supplement showed modest improvement in menopausal symptoms. A non-placebo controlled trial showed similar results. There was a reduction in hot flashes, joint pains and muscle stiffness. There was also an improvement in mood. Equolibration could be taken with **Flash-Ease** to possibly potentize its effects for women who are having problems with hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms.

Soy isoflavones (like equol) do appear to have a mild thyroid inhibiting effect, but Asian women who eat soy also tend to eat a lot of iodine-rich seaweeds. Since iodine can also be helpful in treating breast cancer and it increases the conversion of daidzein into equol, the consumption of seaweeds and soy together may be a critical factor in reduced risk of breast cancer among Asian women. So, it may be beneficial to take Equolibration with **Liquid Dulse** or **kelp**.

Prostate Health and Male "Plumbing Problems"

If they live long enough, most men will experience at least some problem with their prostate. This small doughnut shaped gland encircles the urethra at the base of the bladder. So, if it swells due to prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) or grows larger due to BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia) it will inhibit the flow of urine causing men to develop problems with their male "plumbing." It can also become cancerous, with prostate cancer the third major cancer men experience.

In this issue of Sunshine Sharing, we'll discuss natural ways to maintain and regain prostate health, keeping the male plumbing in good working order.



Antiviral Herbs and Supplements *Continued from page 3*

tract infections in men, and have a moderate effect on BPH. It contains both saw palmetto and pumpkin seeds, along with herbs like goldenseal (which helps with urinary tract infections) and lobelia (an antispasmodic that may ease painful urination). For prostate enlargement and urinary problems in men, use 2-3 capsules three times daily.

Other Prostate-Friendly Formulas

Although not specifically a prostate formula, **Herbal Pumpkin** has also proven beneficial for some men's prostate problems, particularly when these are due to pelvic congestion.

KB-C is a Chinese herbal blend for weakness of the kidneys. It contains herbs that can be helpful for prostatitis, BPH and

impotency in males. It combines well with Equilibrium to improve urinary flow and reduce nighttime urination.

Finally, if you are using natural remedies for prostate problems, it's a good idea to have your prostate checked on a regular basis by a healthcare professional. This helps you determine if what you are doing is working or not.

Additional Help and Information

For more information about natural remedies for viral infections, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following sources:

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Steven Horne and Kimberly Balas

<http://treelite.com/articles/articles/equilibrium.html>

Herbal Therapy and Supplements by Merrill A. Kuhn and David Winston

The Male Herbal by James Green