

Natural Solutions for Prostate Health

By Dr. Robert G. Silverman DC, DACBN, MS, CNS, CCN, CSCS, CIISN

Frequent Signs and Symptoms of Prostate Disorders

- Increased progressive urinary frequency, especially at night
 - Weak urinary stream
 - Straining and dribbling on urination
- Feeling that the bladder cannot be completely emptied
- Excessive sensitivity to the presence of any residual urine in the bladder
 - Impotence (sometimes)
 - Burning on urination

The prostate, a donut-shaped gland the size of a walnut, lies below the bladder and surrounds the urethra in males. It secretes a fluid that increases sperm motility and lubricates the urethra to prevent infection. As men age, benign (non-malignant) prostate enlargement (BPH – benign prostatic hyperplasia) is extremely common, affecting 5 – 10% of men at age 30 and over 90% of men over age 85. Almost half of all men over age 45 suffer from some degree of prostate enlargement. If the enlarged prostate pinches off the flow of urine from the bladder, problems associated with bladder obstruction occur, such as increased urinary frequency, nighttime awakening to empty the bladder, and a reduction in the force and speed of urinary flow.

For the most accurate diagnosis, a digital prostate examination will likely be performed and/or an ultrasound along with the blood test for prostate-specific antigen. A blood test is also used to differentiate between the similarity of symptoms of BPH and prostate cancer. However, a definitive diagnosis of BPH can be made with the aid of ultrasound measurements. The blood test measures levels of a protein produced in the prostate: prostate specific antigen (PSA). Normal value for PSA is less than 4 ng/ml. A level above 10 ng/ml is highly indicative of prostate cancer, while mid-range elevations in PSA can be caused by BPH. In some instances, however, prostate cancer may be present

without elevations in PSA levels. A man over 50 with an immediate relative who has had prostate cancer, a yearly digital prostate examination as well as a PSA test is recommended.

Prostatitis

Prostatitis is an infection of the prostate gland itself - the prostate becomes tender and inflamed. In addition to having difficulty urinating, a man can suffer from chills, fever, back pain, and pain upon urination.

Around forty years of age, the prostate often begins a kind of growth spurt. It is believed to be related to shifts in hormone levels – at this time, a man's testosterone levels begin to decline and there is an increase in the level of a breakdown product of testosterone called

dihydrotestosterone (DHT) (the enzyme responsible for this conversion of testosterone to DHT is 5-alpha reductase). High levels of the pituitary hormone prolactin may be involved as well, and levels of other hormones may rise or fall too. The result is that the body overproduces prostate cells, which ultimately leads to an enlarged prostate (BPH).

Prostatic enlargement responds well to natural treatment. Dietary and herbal therapies are especially effective at reducing the swelling and balancing the hormones.

Preventive Measures can and should be taken. Alcohol intake is directly correlated with the diagnosis of BPH so limiting alcohol consumption would be a wise choice. Avoidance of pesticide exposure is highly recommended. Pesticides increase the activity of 5-alpha reductase (which converts testosterone to DHT) Cigarette smoking is a major source of cadmium, which is a known antagonist of zinc and increases the activity of 5-alpha reductase. Maintain healthful cholesterol levels. Cholesterol damaged by free radicals (high LDLs) is particularly toxic and carcinogenic to the prostate. Damaged forms of cholesterol are thought to play a role in stimulating prostate cell formation in BPH.

Prostate health in the news

In the April issue of *Urology*, an experimental blood test for prostate cancer was used and found to be more specific than the current PSA test – and can tell whether the cancer is spreading outside the prostate gland. The new test looks for a protein called EPCA-2 or early prostate cancer antigen 2. Unlike the PSA, this protein isn't found in normal prostate cells. Instead it occurs in relatively large amounts only in prostate cancer cells. This determines what kind of prostate cancer you have and if it has spread. It is about 2 years away from FDA approval.

Supplements for Prostate Health

There are a variety of vitamins and nutritional supplements that are scientifically validated as means for enhancing prostate health. My favorites are essential fatty acids (EFAs), zinc, saw palmetto, nettles, and pumpkin seed oil.

- 1) **Essential fatty acids** play significant roles in overall inflammatory actions found throughout the body. Dose: 2 – 4 gm per day. As increased vitamin E levels are needed whenever essential fatty acids are used, many practitioners suggest the use of 200 IU of a mixed vitamin E.
- 2) **Zinc** can be effective in reducing the size of the prostate and easing the symptoms of BPH: 1) it suppresses the activity of the enzyme 5-alpha reductase (which causes the production of additional prostate cells); 2) it reduces the levels of prolactin. Choose zinc picolinate or oxide and take 15 to 60 mg daily. Copper increases the benefit of zinc. Take 2 – 3 mg of copper daily.
- 3) **Saw Palmetto** is a standard medical treatment for BPH utilized throughout Europe. The fat soluble extract of saw palmetto berry reduces and keeps symptoms in check when used regularly. Research suggests that the fat soluble constituents found in saw palmetto berry inhibits an enzyme 5-alpha reductase, which in turn converts testosterone to its more active form dihydrotestosterone (DHT) which binds to prostatic tissue. This form of testosterone has also been implicated in male pattern baldness.

One European double blind study compared saw palmetto and finasteride, a common pharmaceutical drug used in the treatment BPH. Saw palmetto treated BPH as effectively as the drug with none of the side effects associated with the drug, such as loss of libido. Many studies have used 320 mg daily of saw palmetto extract.

- 4) **Nettles** are often contained in formulas including saw palmetto and pygeum, preliminary studies have shown that nettle extract will also work alone to reduce symptoms of BPH such as increasing urinary volume and maximum flow rate of urine. An appropriate amount is 120 mg of nettle root extract (in capsules or tablets) twice per day or 2 to 4 ml of tincture three times per day.
- 5) **Pumpkin seed oil** has been used by itself as well as in combination with saw palmetto with favorable results. Furthermore, animal studies have corroborated these effects in that a noticeable improvement of both urethra and urinary bladder function was reported which could account for and decreased symptoms of BPH in humans. Pumpkin seed oil extracts standardized for fatty acid content has been used in BPH studies in the amount of 160 mg three times per day with meals.

Finally, incorporate the nutritional supplement with these basic dietary recommendations. Eat lots of whole grains and fresh vegetables and get your proteins from beans, fish, and soy products. Consume tomatoes, which is an excellent source of lycopenes (a phytochemical that has important protective effect on the prostate). Substitute green tea in place of coffee and avoid sugars at all cost! And last, but not least, exercise!

“Good health begins with prevention” Smart patient

Dr. Robert G. Silverman graduated Magna cum Laude from the University of Bridgeport, College of Chiropractic. He is a Certified Nutrition Specialist, Certified Clinical Nutritionist, has a Masters of Science in Human Nutrition, is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, and is a Diplomat with the American Clinical Board of Nutrition. Dr. Silverman is also a Certified Sports Nutritionist from The International Society of Sports Nutrition. He has a full-time successful private practice in White Plains where he specializes in the diagnosis of joint pain and its treatments with an innovative, established and well-researched approach to non-surgical care while incorporating proper nutrition protocols. He is a nationally known speaker and author and can be seen weekly on his own local TV show “Get Healthy w/ Dr. Rob”. More info at www.DrRobertSilverman.com.

Office address: 280 Dobbs Ferry Rd., Suite 204, White Plains, NY 10607

Office: (914) 287-6464