

Enlarged Prostate- Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

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Problems with the prostate can vary and include inflammation of the prostate, enlargement of the prostate and prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. However enlargement of the prostate (or BPH) is by far the most common of all prostate conditions and is described as an age-related, non-malignant enlargement of the prostate gland. It affects 50-60% of middle aged men and is present in 90% of men by the age 85.

Enlargement of the prostate is extremely common and although it is generally benign (meaning not cancerous), the symptoms can be quite uncomfortable and can severely impact your quality of life. Symptoms include increased frequency of urination especially at night, urgency of urination, discomfort and fullness, dripping after urination, as well as hesitancy, decreased force and caliber of urine and increased urinary infections.

As men age there are certain hormonal changes that take place. Testosterone levels tend to fall as others, including oestrogen and serum hormone binding globulin (SHBG) begin to rise. SHBG binds to your free testosterone further reducing how much of it you have and can stimulate prostate growth as well.

Exposure to cadmium from cigarette smoke and air pollution is another contributing factor. Cadmium increases the activity of 5-alpha-reductase, an enzyme responsible for converting testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT) in the prostate gland. It is this *DHT that is partially responsible for stimulating prostate growth*. Zinc is an essential nutrient in the treatment of prostate conditions as it helps the body remove cadmium as well as inhibiting 5-alpha-reductase. Zinc has been shown to reduce the size of the prostate and to reduce symptoms in a lot of males.

Other lifestyle factors such as carrying an excess amount of fat and poor dietary habits need to be addressed. Higher levels of fat tissue have been associated with lower testosterone levels and higher oestrogen levels which lead to favorable conditions for prostate growth. Prostate problems, specifically prostate cancer, are largely lifestyle related and are very preventable with the right dietary and lifestyle modifications and nutritional support.

In terms of nutritional and herbal support there is a lot of very sound scientific information related to the beneficial affects on prostate health for such agents. Saw palmetto is a very well researched herb in terms of its use in BPH. It has compared favorably to orthodox medications but without the side effects. It reduces the symptoms of BPH via its influence on implicated enzymes and has proven very effective in numerous clinical trials. Not all supplements are created equally so it is important to use a good quality saw palmetto extract in order to achieve the desired results.

Stinging nettle root extract also has a positive effect, improving symptoms by stopping certain hormones from exerting their negative actions. Don't forget the importance of zinc as mentioned previously and others not to be discounted include lycopene, isoflavones, and selenium, all which have shown good results in different research and clinical studies.

It is important to seek professional advice and a qualified naturopath can help to tailor an individualized treatment plan to best suit your needs. This way the correct nutrients and herbs are prescribed at the correct dosages. Plus your progress will be monitored by someone who knows what they are doing and who can adjust your prescription as you go. In addition, your lifestyle will also be addressed and you will learn what things may be contributing to your condition and also what you can do yourself to assist your progress. These tips and the education you receive also give you power over your health and allow you to maintain the positive changes and good health you have created.

Prostate Health

Things you can do to help the process

You can help to support your body and the supplements you are taking by making some dietary changes to reduce any further inflammation and to improve your overall nutritional status and vitality.

- Follow your blood type diet this helps to remove any additional dietary components that may be increasing inflammation in your body.
- Increase your consumption of garlic, onions, and cabbage as they help support your body's ability to detoxify cadmium.
- STOP SMOKING. Cigarettes are increasing your cadmium toxicity and displacing the zinc you are trying to replace.
- Eat and chew pumpkin seeds (pepitas), they are high in zinc and essential fatty acids
- Reduce your saturated fat intake and increase your consumption of essential fatty acids.
- Increase your consumption of soy and plant foods as the isoflavones they contain can help to inhibit the multiplication and spread of cancer cells as well as inhibit 5-alpha-reductase.
- Drink plenty of purified water to hydrate you body and help flush toxins from your body and maintain regularity of your bowel motions.
- Maintain healthy weight or lose some any excess weight to assist your hormonal system.
- Take regular exercise to increase blood flow and circulation, ensuring the distribution of oxygen and nutrients to your cells.
- Eat small meals often, chewing well and taking the time to enjoy your food rather than rushing to eat it. This aids your digestive processes ensuring you are breaking down your foods more thoroughly and getting the nutrients you require.
- Maintain a positive mental outlook. Focus on feeling healthy, vibrant and well. Visualizing yourself radiating with health and vitality helps to pick up your mood and leave you feeling lighter and more able to continue making positive changes in your diet and lifestyle.