



SAW PALMETTO WITH LYCOPENE

Support for benign prostate hyperplasia

The use of saw palmetto standardized herbal extract has proven to be an outstanding treatment for prostate problems in men. In women, too, saw palmetto extract has proven to help problems created by hormonal imbalances. How does it work? What do you need to be aware of when selecting a saw palmetto product? Let's start with prostate problems experienced by men.

Prostate problems in men start gradually. Usually with more frequent trips to the bathroom, especially at night, and the urine stream becoming weaker and often intermittent. Symptoms often escalate to straining, painful urination and the inability to completely empty the bladder.

Such prostate troubles affect half of all men over fifty, and may start to develop while men are in their forties. Is this just an inevitable consequence of aging? Do men have to resign themselves to this problem with all its annoyance, embarrassment and discomfort? Perhaps not. An extract made from saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), a palm tree native to Florida, has been shown to help roughly 90% of men with mild to moderate benign prostatic hyperplasia during the first four to six weeks of therapy. All the major symptoms are improved, especially increased nighttime urination (Murray).

WHAT IS THE PROSTATE

The prostate is a cluster of small doughnut-shaped male sex glands that encircle the urethra just below the bladder. Although the exact function of the prostate is unclear, muscle contraction by the prostate during ejaculation squeezes the fluids into the urethral tract and prostatic secretions to the seminal fluid may stimulate the movement of sperm.

With its proximity to the urethra, any problem with the prostate can hinder the free flow of urine. This problem can be annoying but also dangerous. So what are some problems peculiar to the prostate?

THE ENLARGED PROSTATE (BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA OR BPH)

Tests show that nearly every man over 45 has some enlargement of the prostate. The gradual accumulation of glisty nodules and cholesterol by-products causes the prostate to enlarge. An enlarged prostate can be quite harmless and without noticeable symptoms; however, the

consistency of the prostate tissue is what determines the symptoms. Some men have no problems because their prostate relaxes enough to allow the urine to pass through. Others, however, have a stiffened prostate that constricts the urethra, hindering the free flow of urine. Often the muscles surrounding the bladder will compensate for this stiffened, rigid prostate by becoming stronger. "Serious problems only occur when the bladder muscles are unable to overcome resistance caused by the rigid prostate, and the flow of urine is severely obstructed" (*Am Med Assoc Family Med Guide*).

Researchers conclude that the accumulation of a form of testosterone in the prostate contributes to its enlargement. In the prostate, testosterone is converted to dihydrotestosterone or DHT, a potent hormone that stimulates the prostate and causes the cells to multiply, and eventually causes the prostate to enlarge. This may be compounded by concurrent forming of excess amounts of the female reproductive hormones estrogen and prolactin in men. Both have a role in cell division and levels are higher in men with prostate swelling and cancer.

SAW PALMETTO (*SERENOA REPENS*) AND PROSTATE HEALTH

Saw palmetto extract is derived from saw palmetto berries, a traditional herbal remedy, and well-known for their beneficial effect on the prostate. The evergreen shrub that grows from two to seven feet is found in Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Georgia. However, only in recent years has scientific research corroborated what herbalists have known for generations.

Saw palmetto's active ingredients have been identified and extracted. Not only does the extract of the saw palmetto berries contain compounds that naturally support hormone metabolism, but also the fat-soluble extract of the fruit demonstrates impressive results in the treatment of an enlarged prostate. The extract has also been used to treat prostatitis and urinary tract infections.

The liposterolic extract of saw palmetto can prevent the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone and inhibits the ability of DHT to bind to cellular receptor sites. Instead, DHT is broken down and excreted.

These chemical reactions, precipitated by the active ingredients in saw palmetto, produced impressive results in

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patients with prostate problems. Their major symptoms – increased urinary frequency, nocturia, reduced ability to urinate – were alleviated dramatically.

“For example, a double-blinded, placebo-controlled study of 110 outpatients suffering from BPH obtained impressive clinical results. Nocturia (measured by number of times) decreased by over 45%, flow rate (mL/s) increased by over 50%, and residual urine content of the bladder (mL) decreased by 42% in the group receiving the serenoa extract. In contrast, those on placebo did not significantly improve in nocturia or flow rate and actually worsened in residual urine content of the bladder” (Champault, *et al*).

NOT JUST FOR MEN ANYMORE

At the August 1998 International Saw Palmetto Symposium in Florida there was much discussion on how saw palmetto can help women too. Dr. Paul Barney, a Utah-based MD uses saw palmetto to relieve symptoms of PMS, such as bloating, heaviness or pressure in the pelvic area and cramps. “60 to 70% of my patients who use it say that it worked very well for them... That it's better for PMS symptoms than the standard anti-inflammatory medicine” (Foster).

SAFETY AND DOSAGE

The preferred dosage of Saw Palmetto with Lycopene is 1-2 softgels daily, or as directed by a health care practitioner.

A treatment must be safe before it can be recommended, especially in chronic conditions where treatment is long-term. Saw palmetto has proven safe and effective in numerous scientific studies. The extract is well-tolerated and causes no feminizing effects typical of standard steroid prostate treatments.

OTHER NUTRIENTS THAT BENEFIT THE PROSTATE

While saw palmetto helps regulate and restore prostate hormone balance, other help may be needed to stop hormones, such as estrogen from recycling in the body, sometimes recycling up to five times before being expelled.

Other supplements that can be used along with saw palmetto are lycopene, a tomato extract carotenoid (containing the full range of tomato compounds) known to benefit the prostate. Also, omega-3 essential fatty acids, outstandingly found in Natural Factors RxOmega-3 Factors® (an essential fatty acid combination) are important too.

Men experiencing prostate problems should eat a diet rich in fresh, natural and unprocessed foods that are high in zinc, essential fatty acids and antioxidants. Try to avoid foods high in saturated fats.

BPH and other prostate problems need not be your fate. Find out for yourself how natural botanical extracts and nutritional support can keep your prostate healthy into advanced old age.

KEY REFERENCES

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Foster S., “Not just for men anymore: preliminary research hints that saw palmetto may relieve PMS and ovarian, uterine troubles”, *Herbs for Health*, Jan/Feb; 1999

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