Natural prostate protection

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The prostate is just a little thing. But the healthy functioning of this small, doughnut-shaped muscular gland sure can make a big impact on a guy's life. Just ask any man over the age of 50.


Here's a look at some of the phytonutrient sources recommended by Dr. Saul and other natural health care experts that help protect and promote prostate health for men of all ages. Many of these ingredients are combined in ready-to-use formulas to enhance and broaden their synergistic effect.

A little palm tree makes a big difference
Native Americans long revered the saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) as a traditional plant medicine. Today, a phytotherapeutic extract derived from the berries of this American dwarf palm tree is well recognized for its effectiveness. In an evaluation of 18 clinical studies, the researchers concluded that saw palmetto was significantly more effective than placebo in treating the symptoms of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH).

A review of clinical evidence determined saw palmetto provides "mild to moderate improvement in urinary symptoms and flow measures" results comparable to those produced by a prescription drug—with fewer negative side effects. The average dosage used in most studies was 160 mg of standardized extract with 85 to 95 percent fatty acid sterols, taken twice daily.

The Cuban connection
Another palm tree related to the saw palmetto palm may also have prostate protecting powers. Recently a team of
Prostate pleasers

Rarely does the solution to any health problem come in a single answer or product. It is far more likely to be discovered in a combination of dietary, nutritional, and lifestyle approaches. Follow these 13 easy steps to please your prostate:

1. Eat cooked tomatoes several times a week. Lycopene, one of the phytochemicals in tomatoes and watermelon reduces the risk of prostate cancer.

2. Use herbs and spices, especially garlic, oregano, rosemary, and cinnamon, to boost the antioxidant content of meals.

3. Eat nuts and seeds. Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and ground flaxseeds are especially good for prostate health.

4. Limit dairy foods. Milk products are suspected of increasing the potential for prostate cancer.

5. Include vitamin E, selenium, and other antioxidant supplements in your daily supplement program.

6. Eliminate or reduce coffee. Drink more water. Drink green tea to boost your body's cancer-fighting antioxidants.

7. Add isoflavones from soy foods to your menu. Eat tofu, miso, and soy yogourt. Drink soy milk and smoothies made with organic fermented soy powder.

8. Take folic acid. Take at least 400 mcg daily in supplement form and eat leafy green vegetables every day.

9. Take zinc supplements. Men with prostate cancer have been found to have suboptimal levels of zinc. Choose citrate, chelate, or other easily absorbed sources, and take about 25 mg daily.

10. Dose up on D. Exciting new research is showing that vitamin D₃ reduces prostate cancer risk.


13. Sexercise. Add more sex and exercise to your life.

Researchers from the National Center for Scientific Research in Havana City, Cuba published a promising report on the effects of a lipid extract made from the Cuban royal palm fruit (Roystonea regia). Their study concluded that the extract showed preventive effects on testosterone-induced prostate enlargement.

Take the sting out

A prickly member of the mint family, stinging nettle root (Urtica dioica) is proving to be a mid-life man's best friend. A placebo-controlled, double-blind study conducted by the Institute of Urology in Moscow and published in the World Journal of Urology (June 2005) found stinging nettle root extract combined with saw palmetto extract was "clearly superior" to placebo for the relief of moderate and severe lower urinary tract symptoms in men diagnosed with BPH.

Men taking this prescribed herbal combination experienced significant improvement in urinary flow rate, output, and duration as determined by ultrasound testing methods. The study dosage was 120 mg stinging nettle root extract taken twice daily.

A rare gift from Africa

Pygeum africanum is a large evergreen tree also known as the African plum that grows in the high plateau regions of South Africa. Traditionally, the bark is powdered and made into a tea for genitourinary complaints such as bladder pain and urinary difficulty.

In 1999 the journal Urology reported that 100 mg of Pygeum africanum extract proved beneficial in treating the symptoms of BPH. Sadly, increased harvesting has endangered the wild species. Make certain your choice of product is sustainably cultivated, not from a wild-crafted source.

These natural plant-based medicines are proving to be safe, effective, and economical remedies that rival the effectiveness of prostate drugs, without the negative side effects.

Lucretia Schanfarber researches and writes on health topics. She lives simply and gardens organically on Quadra and Cortes Islands with her husband.