

Prostate Health, Naturally



AS HE AGES, virtually every man experiences prostate enlargement, or swelling. (Prostate-gland enlargement is also called benign prostatic hypertrophy or hyperplasia, or BPH.) By age 50, half of all men will experience some symptoms of BPH. By age 60, 80 percent of men will.

As the prostate, which produces the fluid that transmits sperm during ejaculation, enlarges, it presses on the urethra (the tube that moves urine out of the bladder). Symptoms of BPH include: slowness of the urinary stream; difficulty beginning urination; the urge to urinate frequently or suddenly, even when your bladder is empty; and the need to get up and urinate at night. Extreme symptoms include urinary tract infection and kidney damage.

But why does the prostate become enlarged? "We know that inflammation or enlargement is always the result of a chronic accumulation of waste products that have not been eliminated through the body through sweat, through breath, through urine, through feces," says Georgianna Donadio, D.C., Ph.D., an integrative-health expert and nutritionist in Dover, Massachusetts. "When our bodies cannot eliminate waste, very often this will invest itself into our glands."

Fortunately, there are simple steps any man can take to improve the health of his prostate.

According to Donadio, exercise is the number-one recommended way of increasing blood circulation and facilitating the removal of waste products from the lymph system and glands. She suggests two specific exercises to get blood flowing to the prostate, to help remove toxins from it: squats and scissors (see box). Donadio also recommends a healthy diet for prostate health. "The thing that most reduces inflammation is living food," she says, primarily fresh fruits and vegetables. "It's really a common-sense thing," she adds. "You put living food into a living body, and it gets well. You put processed, sprayed, chemicalized, genetically engineered food into your body, and what is that going to do to your immune system?"

Among herbal remedies, saw palmetto—an extract from a berry from a small palm tree—is promising for those with BPH. An analysis of studies done on saw palmetto found that this herb reduces nighttime urination by 25 percent and other symptoms by 28 percent, as compared to a placebo.

Other steps to reduce BPH include: limiting consumption of fluids after dinner (to reduce the nighttime need to urinate); avoiding alcohol and caffeine, as each stimulate urine flow; and using the bathroom whenever one is available. ■

—Karen Menehan

2 Simple Exercises to Improve Prostate Health

Squats: Stand with your legs shoulder-width apart, toes pointing outward at a 45-degree angle, back straight and hands on a chair back or other solid object for support. Slowly bend your knees to lower your body, and then rise to a standing position. Repeat, building up to at least 20 repetitions. If you feel pain in your knees, lower your body less far.

Scissors: Lie with your back and head flat on the floor with legs raised a few inches, then "scissor" your legs back and forth across each other, building up to at least 20 repetitions. If you feel pain in your lower back, lower your legs closer to the floor.

Both exercises, done daily, increase blood flow to the prostate, helping remove toxins from the gland, according to integrative-health expert and nutritionist Georgianna Donadio, D.C., Ph.D.