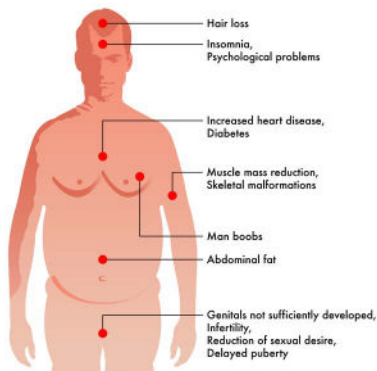


Balancing Men's Hormones

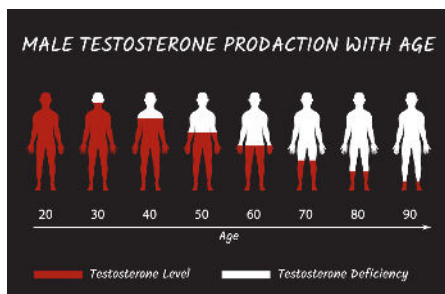
Lose weight, lift depression, solve prostate problems, increase libido and reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease



To all you men out there: Are you struggling with weight problems like unwanted belly fat, poor muscle tone or even have man boobs? Or maybe you're struggling with low energy, anxiety or depression? Perhaps you've experienced a loss of fertility, sexual desire or even the ability to perform? You might be one of the millions of men who suffer from benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or prostatitis, and be experiencing difficulty urinating.

And, for all the ladies reading this, there may be a man in your life who is experiencing problems like these. After all, the majority of men in modern society do.

If any of this is the case, it's important to recognize that these, and other male health problems, may involve hormonal imbalance. A general decline in testosterone levels, coupled with the exposure to environmental chemicals with estrogenic activity, known as xenoestrogens, may be a significant causal factor in all of these issues.



Understanding Male Hormones

Just as women undergo the hormonal changes associated with menopause, men also undergo hormonal changes. Their change is known as andropause, but it's a much more subtle change. Beginning in their 50s, most men experience a drop in testosterone of about one percent a year.

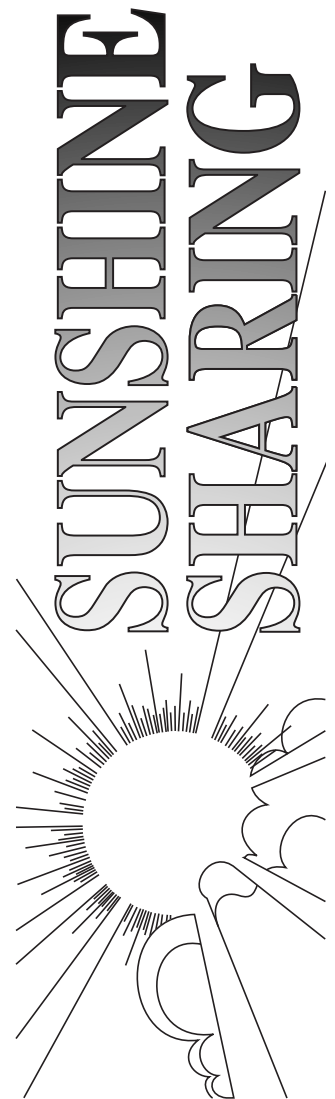
But, in addition to this natural drop, men are experiencing a loss of testosterone that has nothing to do with aging. It also appears it isn't even due to a poor diet or lifestyle. Men today have far lower levels of testosterone than men did in the past, which makes this natural decline even harder on their health.

According to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* in 2007, men's testosterone levels fell by 17% from 1987 to 2004, and that's controlling for diet and lifestyle factors that affect testosterone levels. Researchers in the Massachusetts Male Aging Study observed that men born in recent years had substantially lower testosterone levels than men born between 1916 and 1945.

Whatever is happening, it is affecting young boys, too. There are increasing incidences of birth defects of the penis and undescended testicles in infant boys. These reproductive problems are even being seen in wild animals, suggesting that the problem is an environmental issue. Many believe that excessive exposure to xenoestrogens is to blame.

It is well known that testosterone creates the characteristically male features of a man's body. It contributes to muscle development, facial and body hair and the male drive to compete and succeed. And, of course, it contributes to the male sex drive and ability to perform. Estrogen, on the other hand, creates the physical and emotional characteristics of the female body.

When testosterone level gets too low and estrogen is too high men lose muscle tone, gain weight, start to lose their hair and increase their risk of heart disease, diabetes and structural problems. They also lose drive and ambition, and may experience greater levels of anxiety and depression. They also lose their sex drive and may develop erectile dysfunction.



Your guide to better health the natural way.

Vol. 31 No. 9

Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Enhancing Testosterone

It's clear that many men need to enhance their testosterone levels to improve their overall health. There are many things a man can do to increase his testosterone levels naturally. One is exercise. Regular exercise helps increase testosterone production while reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other degenerative diseases. Resistance training with weights is especially important for men as they grow older.

A natural diet is also helpful. Before the advent of modern civilization, both men and women lived on a diet of high quality animal proteins and vegetables. Grains and other high starchy foods were scarce and sugar foods like fruits and honey were rare treats. People living on these diets had strong bones, muscles and teeth and rarely got sick.

In contrast to traditional diets, modern high carbohydrate diets stress the adrenal glands and the pancreas, resulting in increased levels of insulin and reduced levels of DHEA, the building block for male hormones. DHEA and all reproductive hormones are made from cholesterol, so the current trend to drive cholesterol levels as low as possible actually causes reproductive problems in both sexes. It's part of the reason statins drug (used to lower cholesterol) can cause men to lose muscle mass, suffer from erectile dysfunction and become depressed.

High blood sugar and diabetes not only adversely affect hormone levels, they also adversely affect circulation, which is necessary for normal erections in a man. Dr. Hugo Rodier, a holistic medical doctor in Utah, once said they ought to put a warning label on foods with a high content of refined sugar, "Warning: This product may cause erectile dysfunction."

Men also need to have goals and confidently work towards them in order to fuel their testosterone production. A decline in feelings of self-worth may also be fueling lower testosterone levels.

Fluoride and Testosterone

A compound which may be causing a drop in testosterone levels is fluoride. High doses of fluoride are known to suppress testosterone production, but a study published in Environmental Research in 2003 suggested that even low levels can reduce the amount of available testosterone. Most water supplies in the United States are now fluoridated. So, to protect testosterone levels, avoid fluoridated water and fluoridated toothpastes, mouthwashes and dental treatments. You can help the body detoxify from fluoride by taking iodine supplements or seaweeds like **liquid dulse** or **kelp**.

Drugs can also adversely affect testosterone levels. Classes of medications which may interfere with male reproductive function include anti-inflammatories, antibiotics, antifungals, statins (cholesterol-lowering medications), antidepressants, calcium channel blockers, sleeping pills and high blood pressure medications. Carefully read warning labels to discover if any medications you

take may be affecting your reproductive health and seek other options for resolving your health issues where possible.

Herbs to Boost Testosterone

Herbs and supplements can also be used to increase testosterone. **Ginseng** is a traditional herbal tonic for helping men stay healthy as they age. Many men find that taking a capsule of Korean ginseng every morning helps them maintain a more stable mood and better energy levels. It can also enhance fertility, combat erectile function and reduce stress.

Maca is another potentially useful herb. It is a rejuvenating tonic for reproductive health in both men and women. Studies suggest that maca may be helpful for erectile dysfunction in men.

Other herbs that may help to boost testosterone levels include **cordyceps**, epimedium (also known as horny goat weed), muira puama, sarsaparilla, tongkat ali and tribulus (puncture vine). Pine tree pollen actually contains small amounts of testosterone.

Supplements for Testosterone

There are also nutrients that can support testosterone production in men. These include DHEA, mentioned earlier as the precursor to testosterone. DHEA levels also tend to decline with age. Men over 40 with low testosterone may find it helpful to supplement with about 25 mg. of DHEA each day. A **Men's DHEA Formula** combining DHEA with testosterone enhancing herbs like ginseng and sarsaparilla can be even more helpful.

Zinc is also very important for male reproductive health. Men require more zinc than women for their reproductive function because they lose zinc with each ejaculation. Supplementation with zinc can help improve sperm count, reduce prostate swelling in BPH and help boost testosterone production. 25-50 mg. a day is usually sufficient.

Decreasing Estrogen

Although men naturally produce some estrogen, just like women produce some testosterone, overproduction of estrogen causes problems. Xenoestrogens may be partly to blame for the lower testosterone levels in men and they are certainly a contributing factor in prostate problems, including prostate cancer, loss of sex drive, and the development of male breasts.

In 1962, when Rachel Carson published the environmental classic *Silent Spring*, she revealed the problem of xenoestrogens to the world. She wrote about the pesticide DDT, which has an estrogenic effect, and how it was making eggshells so thin that eggs were being crushed by nesting parents. This was decimating populations of eagles and other large birds.

Although DDT was banned in America, numerous other pesticides and chemicals have estrogenic effects. Mitch Harman M.D., Ph.D., an endocrinologist at The University of Arizona College of Medicine and director of the Kronos Longevity Research Institute, sees the shadows of this today. He says, "I'm concerned that we're just pouring chemicals out into our environment that are endocrine-suppressing, estrogen-like compounds, possibly causing similar disruptions in human reproduction."

Avoiding Xenoestrogens

If men wish to keep their hormones in balance they should avoid xenoestrogens as much as possible. There are many sources of xenoestrogens in modern society. For starters, estrogen supplements are fed to commercial poultry and cattle to increase egg, meat and dairy production.

Estrogenic chemicals are also used in producing plastics. Some estrogen from estrogen-drugs can find its way into the water supply after it is excreted.

To avoid these chemicals start by purchasing organically grown foods wherever possible. Wash non-organically grown produce in a natural cleaning solution to remove chemicals.

Avoid plastic containers, especially soft plastic containers. Heat releases xenoestrogens from plastics. Ever smelled that plastic new car smell? That's the chemicals being released from the plastics in the car when it heats up. Avoid microwaving food in plastic containers, putting hot food in plastic containers and don't drink from plastic containers that have become hot from sitting in the sun. Use glass containers wherever possible. Also, don't give your children—especially your sons—soft plastic toys to chew on.

Phytoestrogens

It's also prudent for men who have low testosterone or reproductive health issues to reduce their exposure to the plant-based estrogens known as phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens may be good for women because they block the more powerful xenoestrogens or help to supplement estrogen after menopause, but some are definitely not good for men.

One of the most problematic phytoestrogenic foods for men is soy. There is research which demonstrates that genistein, one of the phytoestrogens in soy, decreases male fertility. Soy products in animal feed are known to reduce the fertility of male animals. Many body builders also claim it is harder to build muscle on soy-based protein powders. Soy is being increasingly added to foods and many men consume it on vegetarian or vegan diets. Men who want better hormonal balance, however, should avoid it.

An interesting plant that has strong phytoestrogenic effects is hops. In his book *The Natural Testosterone Plan*, Stephen Harrod Buhner explains that beers were originally made from a variety of medicinal plants, many of them possessing testosterone-enhancing action. The decision requiring that beer be made from hops was made by Protestant reformers who wanted to remove sexually-stimulating herbs from beer. They chose hops because it is a sedative that also reduces male sex drive. Beer drinkers be warned—hops is so estrogenic that men harvesting hops on farms have been known to develop erectile dysfunction.

Additional Help and Information

For more information about balancing men's hormones and solving male reproductive problems contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

The Natural Testosterone Plan by Stephen Harrod Buhner
Natural Remedies for Low Testosterone by Stephen Harrod Buhner
Vital Man: Natural Health Care for Men at Midlife by Stephen Harrod Buhner
The Male Herbal by James Green

To reduce excess estrogens in their body men can also take **indole-3 carbinol**, a substance found in cruciferous vegetables that helps with both phase 1 and phase 2 detoxification in the liver. It helps break down excess estrogen compounds, including xenoestrogens, which may contribute to benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and prostate cancer.

Specific Male Health Problems

In addition to the general suggestions for balancing male hormones, here are some specific suggestions for solving specific male reproductive system problems.

Erectile Dysfunction



Erectile dysfunction (ED) affects almost half of American males. It may be partially caused by higher levels of estrogen and lower levels of testosterone, so balancing hormones as previously described may be helpful. However, ED has another major cause—poor circulation. Erections are dependent on a strong supply of blood to the penis. Narrow or clogged arteries cause an insufficient supply of blood to produce an erection.

When Viagra® was released, one million prescriptions were filled. Drugs like Viagra and Cialis increase blood flow to the penis. These drugs work by enhancing nitric oxide (NO), a chemical messenger that dilates blood vessels. A **Nitric Oxide Boosting Formula** is a natural alternative to these drugs. It uses the amino acid L-arginine and natural nitrates from beets to boost NO levels.

Another option is a **Male Performance Formula** containing DHEA, L-arginine, damiana, muira puama stem, saw palmetto fruit, horny goat weed (epimedium) maca and yohimbe. This formula supports circulation, while helping to boost testosterone and aid prostate health.

Benign Prostate Hyperplasia (BPH)

BPH is nonmalignant, abnormal growth of the prostate tissue. The prostate sits under the bladder and the urethra passes through it. When the prostate enlarges it makes it difficult to urinate. Common symptoms include a frequent or urgent need to urinate, urination at night, difficulty starting urination, a weak stream, difficulty completely emptying the bladder and dribbling at the end of urination.

Estimates indicate that 25-80% of men over the age of 40 are affected with benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH), with 90% of men over the age of 80 showing signs of prostate enlargement. One quarter of all men are affected severely enough to require medical attention, often involving surgery. About 32% of those undergoing surgery have complications like incontinence, impotence or enlargement of the breast tissue due to hormone imbalance.

Research suggests this condition is due to an excess of a special form of testosterone called dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Testosterone is converted to DHT by the enzyme 5 α -reductase. When too much of this conversion occurs, usually later in life,

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Continued from page 3

DHT stimulates enlargement of the prostate, baldness, unusual hair growth and acne.

Supplements for BPH

A key to preventing prostate problems, then, is to interfere with the body's production of DHT. Zinc helps with this as do several herbs. The most popular is saw palmetto. It suppresses the expression of estrogen, progesterone and androgen receptors in the prostate and blocks testosterone and DHT from binding to androgen receptors.

Other herbs that have beneficial effects on BPH include nettle root and pygeum. A **Prostate Support Formula** containing saw palmetto, nettle root, pygeum and zinc can be very helpful for easing prostate symptoms. The dose is three capsules twice daily.

Another substance that can help BPH is equol. Equol is a substance produced from the isoflavone daidzein in the intestines of people with the right intestinal bacteria. Only about 25-30 percent of people in Western countries appear to be able to make this conversion as opposed to 50-60 percent of people from Asian countries like Japan, Korea and China.

Equol binds to dihydrotestosterone (DHT) and prevents it from binding to the prostate. It also acts as an agonist to the estrogen receptor beta, which down-regulates the androgen receptors that DHT binds to, which further reduces the tendency of prostate cells to proliferate. Equol can be taken with a Prostate Support Formula to enhance its effectiveness. The dose is 6 mg. once per day.

Prostatitis

Prostatitis is inflammation of the prostate gland. Symptoms are similar to BPH. Prostatitis can be caused by a bacterial infection or by toxic irritants. The prostate is close to the bladder and the rectum, so irritants being eliminated from the body can irritate the prostate and cause it to swell. The problem of prostatitis and BPH may also be caused by a sedentary lifestyle which constrict blood flow in that region.

If the problem is due to an acute or chronic infection, consider some herbs with natural antibacterial action, such as **goldenseal** or **uva ursi**. Many of the herbs used for BPH can also relieve prostatitis, so a **Prostate Support Formula** that also contains herbs for the urinary system like goldenseal, uva ursi, juniper and marshmallow may also be helpful.

Another supplement to consider is **omega-3 essential fatty acids**. Eskimo men who have a fish-rich diet have significantly lower rates of prostatitis and prostate cancer than other men. Omega-3 fatty acids have also been shown to inhibit prostate cell growth and reduce prostate enlargement. They help decrease pain and fatigue, reduce nighttime urination, increase elimination (stream) and increase libido.

Preventing Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is a serious health risk for many men. Reducing exposure to xenoestrogens is a helpful step in reducing the risk of prostate cancer. Some of the herbs used to aid BPH and prostatitis are also helpful for reducing prostate cancer risk.

For example, nettle root shows consistent ability to stop proliferation of human prostate cancer cells in vitro. Saw palmetto has also been shown to have activity against one type of prostate cancer. Omega-3 essential fatty acids may also be helpful.

Another supplement that helps protect against prostate cancer is lycopene. It is found in ripe tomatoes and available as a supplement. A Prostate Support Formula containing lycopene can be taken in lower doses as a preventive aid to reduce the risk of prostate cancer and other prostate problems at the same time.

Improving General Health

The suggestions in this newsletter will not only help men solve specific male health issues, they'll also help a man be healthier in general. Reducing exposure to estrogens, increasing testosterone and improving circulation will also help men feel better emotionally, lose weight and improve their muscle tone. It can also help reduce a man's risk of heart disease and diabetes. So, if you want a healthier and better life, get started today.