

Erectile Dysfunction: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Stress

Performance anxiety Depression Unknown

Nighttime Penile Monitoring

Neurological examination

QUICK REVIEW

An estimated ten to twenty million American men suffer from impotence. Men are capable of retaining their sexual virility well into their eighties. Atherosclerosis of the penile artery is the primary cause of impotence in nearly half the men over the age of fifty who have erectile dysfunction.

Alcohol and/or tobacco use decrease sexual function.

- Nutrition plays a major role in determining virility.

If you use yohimbine, use products marketed by reputable companies that clearly state the level of yohimbine per dosage.

Ginkgo biloba extract is quite helpful in cases that result from a lack of blood flow.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

Restoring potency requires addressing the underlying cause. In the majority of cases, organic factors are the cause. The chief cause is decreased blood flow (vascular insufficiency) due to atherosclerosis. There are a variety of medical treatments for erectile dysfunction, but each treatment has its drawbacks. The natural approach to erectile dysfunction involves the use of diet, exercise, nutritional supplements, and herbs. This combined approach is designed to restore potency by restoring normal physiology.

Diet

A diet rich in whole foods—particularly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes—is extremely important. Adequate protein is also a must; it is better to get high-quality protein from fish, chicken, turkey, and lean cuts of beef (preferably hormone-free) than from fat-filled sources such as hamburgers, roasts, and pork.

Special foods often recommended to enhance virility include liver, oysters, nuts, seeds, and legumes. All of these foods are good sources of zinc.

Lifestyle

Avoid health-destroying practices, such as smoking or excessive consumption of alcohol. Develop a regular exercise program according to the guidelines in the chapter A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

Nutritional Supplements

- Multiple-vitamin-and-mineral formula according to the guidelines given in the chapter SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES Vitamin C: 500-1,000 mg three times per day.

Vitamin E: 400-800IU per day. Flaxseed oil: one tablespoon daily. I •

DHEA: please see LONGEVITY AND LIFE EXTENSION for dosage information

Botanical Medicines

For Impotence with Decreased Libido Choose one of the following or combine them:

- *Panax ginseng*

The dosage of ginseng is related to the ginsenoside content. The typical dose (taken one to three times daily) should contain a saponin content of at least 5 mg of ginsenosides with a ratio of Rb1 to Rg1 of 2:1. For example, for a high-quality ginseng root powder or extract containing 5% ginsenosides, the dose would be 100 mg. As each

individual's response to ginseng is unique, care must be taken to observe possible ginseng toxicity. It is best to begin at lower doses and increase gradually. The Russian approach for long term administration of either Panax or Siberian ginseng is to use ginseng cyclically for a period of fifteen to twenty days followed by a two-week interval without any ginseng. This recommendation appears prudent.

- Muira puama (*Ptychopetalum olacoides*) extract (6:1): 250 mg three times per day

For Arterial Insufficiency

- Ginkgo biloba extract (24% ginkgo flavonglycosides): 80 mg three times per day

For Elevated Prolactin Levels

- Chaste berry (*Vitex agnus castus*) extract (0.5% agnuside content): 350-500 mg daily

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For Supportive Therapy

Herbs described in the chapter PROSTATE ENLARGEMENT, especially *Pygeum africanum*, may be helpful. Also, damiana tea may be helpful