

**Male Hormones**  
**Pro-sexuals (Sexual dysfunction-males): how low is your libido?**  
**P. Anthony Chapdelaine, Jr., MD, MSPH**

There are prescription medications, fraught with the perils of their sometimes fatal side-effects, that are often used for erection problems. A number of herbal/supplement combination products are available, with few or no side-effects, that do as well, at a fraction of the cost.

You can also try some of the following individual supplements which work to improve desire/libido, help maintain erections, and generally increase stamina and performance. Watch out for side-effects when starting any supplement (e.g. blood pressure, depression, fatigue, etc. just as you would with prescription medicine). Side-effects are unusual, but possible. Saliva testing is the most useful way to determine whether there are deficiencies or excesses (hormonal imbalances).

- 1. Epimedium sagittatum** (leafy herb native to China known as Yin Yang Huo; literally "horny goat weed," or, "licentious goat."). Sexual stimulant: stimulates adrenals to trigger hormone secretions, expands the circulatory system, increases the sperm count and semen density. Also, promoter of kidney health.
- 2. Tribulus terrestris** (herb in Europe, especially Bulgaria, and Orient) This is used to improve sexual performance (improves duration of erection) and heighten desire/libido (aphrodisiac). Can stimulate sperm production (spermatogenesis) in infertile men. May increase testosterone.
- 3. Muira puama** (Ptychopetalum olacoides) - bark and roots from a bush found in Brazil. Also called "potency wood." Used internally or to bathe the genitals (aphrodisiac). Helps with erectile problems. Use the extract liquid form (where ingredients have been extracted by heated alcohol; the ground bark or root powder doesn't work).
- 4. Ashwaganda** (Withania somnifera) or "Indian ginseng" - an Ayurvedic herbal. Said to help with stamina and strength. This will help with adrenal stress chemicals and also with male hormones and libido. Take 300 mg of the powdered root once or twice a day or take the tincture about 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon a day.
- 5. Schizandra** (schizandra chinensis, known in China as Wu Wei Zi): from the berry: improves libido in women and staying power (erection) in men. Said to quicken reflexes, stimulate respiration. May promote labor in women. Taken as a fruit: 1200 mg three times a day. Taken as a capsule extract about 125 mg twice a day.
- 6. Siberian ginseng root** (Eleutherococcus senticosus): General tonic, increases energy, stamina, vitality. Said to help increase libido and sexual performance. Total of 100 mg. daily
- 7. Saw palmetto** (Serenoa repens: berry or fruit is active source): shrub sized palm in Southern US. Relieves prostate problems: excessive urination, dribbling, incomplete emptying of bladder, sense of heaviness. Saw palmetto works for up to 88%. Clinical studies show it is better than Proscar and Hytrin Use at least 160 mg twice per day saw palmetto berry extract (standardized to 85 to 95% fatty acids and sterols). May help increase libido, virility and performance. (Alternative for prostate enlargement: 100 mg three times a day of beta-sitosterol.)
- 8. Ginkgo biloba:** increases vascular circulation, including to the penis. Standardized to 24% flavone glycosides, take 40 to 60 mg. three times a day. Watch for possible stomach or intestinal discomfort, headache or dizziness.
- 9. Bilberry** (Vaccinium myrtillus): rich in anti-oxidants (anthocyanosides), this herb has many uses. It increases circulation to the genitals. Take 80 to 160 mg. extract capsule three times a day (standardized to 25% anthocyanidin).
- 10. Ginseng** (Panax ginseng): Contains ginsenosides. Shown to increase nitric oxide which relaxes artery walls, increasing blood flow to penis (British Pharmacology, May 1995). Standardized, take 100 mg. once or twice a day. Don't take if you have high blood pressure, are pregnant; don't take with MAO-inhibiting antidepressants, or blood thinners (like warfarin). Don't take with caffeine. Take a one-week break after three weeks of use.
- 11. Androstenedione** increases blood levels of testosterone in males ( 300 mg/d): Feb. 2000, JAMA (also females - spray helps with libido prior to intercourse). Increase in estradiol and estrone as well (DHEA and androstenedione both increase levels of testosterone in females at 100 mg/d (increased by androstenedione twice as much as by DHEA).
- 12. DIM** (diindolylmethane - preferred to I3C, indole-3-carbinol): phytonutrient from cruciferous vegetables of Brassica genus (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts), with three-day old broccoli sprouts containing the highest content of DIM); eliminates estrogen by increasing enzyme activity. DIM boosts "good" estrogens (2-hydroxy), and reduces "bad" estrogens (16-hydroxy and 4-hydroxy) estrones (there are high 16-hydroxy levels in breast cancer). Benign prostate enlargement and some prostate cancer may be related to estrogen (not testosterone) buildup.
- 13. Royal Maca** for libido and balancing of hypothalamus. Take per label instructions (best source:

<http://www.wholeworldbotanicals.com/royalmaca.html>). It normalizes the hypothalamus, pituitary circuit to improve all hormones. Read the worldbotanicals website articles.

**14. L-arginine HCl** (amino acid): Increases nitric oxide which helps with achieving and maintaining an erection. Use the powder: one gram in am and one gram in pm

**15. Choline citrate** powder: 1500 mg (1.5 grams), and, Calcium Pantothenate: 545 mg.. Take these about 30 minutes before sex to help with erection.

**16. Avena sativa** (wild oats or green oats extract): mentioned in German Pharmacopeia 200 years ago as an aphrodisiac. Increases interest in sex by freeing up testosterone. Take 250 mg per day total dose. Also helps with depression, stress.

**17. Damiana** (*Turnera diffusa*): Tonic for nervous system and hormones. Useful for type of diabetes which is related to insulin insensitivity and decreased testosterone. Increases libido and performance in men. Total of 50 mg. per day.

**18.** Conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT) may result in low testosterone. **Progesterone** supplementation may be necessary since it inhibits the enzyme 5-alpha reductase (enzyme that converts testosterone to DHT). (This is also the way that saw palmetto works.) DIM (mentioned above) also inhibits the conversion of testosterone to DHT. DHT contributes to thinning of the hair and prostate enlargement.

**19.** A good nutritional plan and vitamin supplementation is helpful (zinc, natural vitamin E, vitamin C, omega 3 fatty-acids, etc.) and should be planned carefully with the help of a nutritional expert (usually not allopathic physicians who receive virtually no training in this field).