

# PREVENTION IS KEY TO PROSTATE HEALTH

*By Klaus Ferlow*

Infection, enlargement and cancer are three common problems that challenge prostate health. According to the Canadian Cancer Society prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in Canadian men and it accounts for almost one in four cancer diagnoses. In 2002, an estimated 18,200 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer; 4,300 died from it. On average, 350 Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer every week. Of those diagnosed, 83 will die each week. Further, statistics reveal that one in eight men will develop prostate cancer during his lifetime after age 70 and one in 28 will die from it.

Symptoms of an enlarged prostate typically appear in men after 50 years of age, in many cases even earlier. An enlarged prostate does not necessarily indicate cancer, but it is a symptom that should not be ignored. It is not uncommon for the prostate gland to become enlarged as a man ages. This condition is referred to as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). The exact cause of this condition is not known. Prostate enlargement and cancer are both linked to hormonal changes that occur as men get older which is similar to the menopausal changes that occur in women. Statistics show that approximately 75% of males between the ages of 30 to 40 will develop enlargement of the prostate. This increases to 90% of men over the age of 65 years.

Here are some signs to watch out for. Your health care practitioner or physician should check out any of these symptoms.

- a weak, hesitant or interrupted flow of urine
- difficulty controlling the flow of urine
- pain or straining to maintain a stream of urine
- blood in the urine or semen
- a sensation of incomplete emptying of the bladder
- frequent urination, especially during the night
- infection of the bladder
- pain or stiffness in the hips, thighs and lower back
- cystitis and kidney failure

Prevention is key to prostate health. Good dietary habits and supplementation can help to prevent most problems associated with the prostate. The following offers some simple guidelines to clean up your diet and environment, and to enrich your nutrition and supplementation. It may not be possible to follow each of these recommendations, but a few alterations to your current practices can make a significant difference.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### ***Try to Avoid***

- daily consumption of red meats
- refined sugar, alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, white flour products, hydrogenated fats (deep fried vegetable oils), margarine, processed peanut butter.

- chemicals added to food (artificial preservatives such as BHA, BHT, MSG, nitrites, nitrates, sodium benzoates, processed meats and sausages, artificial colouring and flavouring, sweeteners (like Aspartame Nutrasweet or Equal) and saccharine (like Sweet 'n Low) found in diet sodas, diabetic foods and other processed low calorie foods
- fluoride, chlorine, aluminium and Teflon cookware, amalgam (mercury) dental fillings

### ***Try to include***

- zinc -the single most important nutrient for a health prostate (pumpkin seeds are an excellent source)
- other nutrient rich seeds include hemp, flax, sunflower, sesame seeds
- unrefined cold pressed nut and seed oils such as flax, hemp, walnut, sesame, evening primrose, fish oil
- organic and fresh, leafy green vegetables, whole grains and raw wheat germ (includes freshly pressed juices of carrots, green vegetables, citrus fruit, mangos)
- chickpeas, pistachios, almonds, brazil nuts, hazel, walnuts, lentils, beans, cabbage, spinach, Swiss chard, oatmeal
- apples, onions, tomatoes, watermelon, grapefruit, papaya, carrots, sweet potatoes, turnip, corn, whole grain cereals
- additional nutritional supplements like Vitamin C, B6, B complex, bee pollen, caprylic acid, digestive enzymes, lactobacillus acidophilus
- beneficial herbal remedies like saw palmetto, pygeum africanum (is an evergreen tree growing in central and southern Africa), stinging nettle, cat's claw (from a bark of a tree in Peru), echinacea, ginseng, buchu, goldenseal, uva ursi, chaparral, parsley, sage, St. John's Wort tea, horsetail bath

Of the herbs listed, saw palmetto is the most commonly used herb to offer protection for the prostate. Studies have shown that saw palmetto alters the hormone level, thereby shrinking the prostate. Clinical trials have established saw palmetto to be an effective alternative to prostate surgery. Men using it also experience an increase in sex drive and ability to function sexually. It must be used long-term to shrink the prostate, but many men notice an improvement in their symptoms within six weeks. Saw palmetto can be used to increase strength and muscle mass and it works best when combined with exercise program.

Men should have an annual check up with their health care practitioner from the age of forty onward. Good prostate health begins with prevention.

**Please Note:** This information is offered for its educational value and should not be used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of disease.

### **References & further readings:**

- The Natural Way of a health prostate, Michael B. Schachter, M.D., ISBN 0-87983-650-4  
 The Men's Essential Guide to Prostate Health, Victor Contreras, M.D., Garry Gordon, M.D., Roger Libby, Ph.D, Freedom Press  
 Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy & Prostate Cancer, Kurt W. Donsbach, Ph.D., ISBN 1-87857-017-9  
 The Prostate, Everything You Need Do Know about the man gland, Yosh Taguchi, M.D., ISBN 1-55263-277-6  
 Nature Cure for Prostate Troubles, Harry Clemens, N.D., D.O, ISBN 0-85269-023-1  
 Protect Your Prostate, Michael Colgan, N.D., ISBN 1-896817-17-3

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