

THE DOCTOR IS IN:

Prostate Health Essentials - Saw Palmetto, 5LX and Beyond

by Taryn Forrelli, ND



Prostate health may not be something that men openly talk about, but it is certainly something they need to pay attention to, especially if they are over the age of forty. It is then that physiologic factors such as hormone imbalance, inflammation, and oxidative stress can begin to affect the size of the prostate as well as the integrity of its cellular DNA. Fortunately, scientific evidence suggests that herbal therapeutics and supplemental nutrients, especially those that work to support hormone balance, promote a healthy inflammation response, and modulate oxidative stress are incredibly valuable for supporting and maintaining prostate health.*

Creating Hormone Balance

The single most researched and valuable herb for nourishing the prostate is one that has been used for more than a century to support the health of the urinary tract, saw palmetto.* A review of eighteen clinical trials showed that a daily dose of 320 mg of saw palmetto extract can improve urinary flow in men while reducing frequency in 90% of patients within 4 to 6 weeks. One of the principle mechanisms by which saw palmetto supports prostate health is through inhibition of the conversion of testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a powerful growth stimulant for prostate cells. Saw palmetto has also been shown to inhibit the binding of DHT to prostate tissue and relax the muscles of the prostate and bladder so that urine can flow more freely. The hormone balancing effects of saw palmetto can be improved by combining it with herbs that share a similar mechanism of action, such as stinging nettle root and pumpkin seed oil.*

The Inflammation Connection

There is emerging scientific evidence that the inflammatory response can affect the growth of prostate cells. Inflammation, particularly the kind generated by activation of an inflammatory enzyme called 5-lipoxygenase (5LX), is thought to affect cellular DNA, disrupting the mechanisms responsible for maintaining normal cell growth and replication.* The modulation of 5LX is therefore a key strategy for maintaining prostate health.*

Modulating 5LX Naturally

If you conduct a simple search of the phytochemical and ethnobotanical database compiled by Dr. Jim Duke of the Agricultural Research Service/USDA for plants that modulate 5LX, you'll discover something rather sweet. The herbs and spices that have long been considered a chef's best friend are also man's best friend. In fact, one of the richest sources of 5LX modulators is the herb ginger which contains twenty-two 5LX-modulating phytonutrients. Rosemary is another notable source, with eighteen 5LX-modulating phytonutrients documented. Interestingly, one study found that saw palmetto also displays 5LX-modulatory activity, but only when the full spectrum of the herb's naturally occurring phytonutrients were extracted using supercritical carbon dioxide. Fractionated saw palmetto extract, created using harsh chemical solvents, showed no effect when tested.

A Most Impressive Prostate-Protective Nutrient

No prostate health program is complete without the addition of selenium. A seven-year double-blind, placebo-controlled study funded by the NIH and American Cancer Institute found that subjects taking a whole-food selenium supplement maintained normal prostate cell growth more effectively than those not taking the supplement. What makes selenium so protective? The body uses selenium to make glutathione, one of its strongest antioxidant defenses against oxidative free radicals – atoms which are missing an electron and will do anything to find one, including stealing them from healthy cell membranes and cellular DNA. When electrons are stolen from healthy cells, the cells start to malfunction. Antioxidants are defined by their ability to freely donate electrons without becoming damaged, so as long there are antioxidants around, electron stealing does not need to occur and cells remain healthy.

New Chapter®'s Prostate 5LX®

All of the essentials for supporting and maintaining prostate health can be found in one innovative dietary supplement made by **New Chapter, Inc.** (newchapter.com) called **Prostate 5LX**. Expertly formulated by Master Herbalist, Paul Schulick, the product delivers supercritical extracts of saw palmetto, ginger, and rosemary along with whole-food complexed selenium and solvent-free extracts of green tea and pumpkin seed oil. The result: safe, effective relief from urinary complaints and the assurance that while a man may forget to remember the importance of a healthy prostate, it is not forgotten.

* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.