

# \*PROSTATE PROBLEMS? THE ALTERNATIVES THAT CAN HELP

By Mike King

The latest statistics show that virtually every man will encounter a problem with his prostate at some time in his life, but usually later in life. Maybe you have been diagnosed with Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy or BPH, which is an enlarged prostate, or Prostatitis, which is an inflammation of the prostate. A lump or irregularity was felt during your DRE, digital rectal exam, your PSA or prostate specific antigen (a protein produced by the prostate gland) is too high) or your Gleason grading score was high (a measure of cancer cells' resemblance to the organ they came from). You may have other men in your family who have had problems or even prostate cancer and you are at higher risk for more serious problems.

Hopefully, your condition is only mild and doesn't yet need aggressive treatment and you may even have been told to take a "watchful waiting" approach. Aren't there more options that you can do now no matter what your diagnosis or symptoms? Maybe you want to take a preventative pro-active approach now that would greatly help reduce your incidence of prostate diseases besides the well known proper diet and exercise?

Dr. Aaron Katz, M.D., professor, director, and board-certified urologist at the Center for Holistic Urology at Columbia University Medical Center has written an essential guide to prostate health that answers all these questions. The book, *Dr. Katz's guide to Prostate Health*, addresses how to prevent and treat prostate disease with the latest breakthroughs from traditional and alternative medicine. Published in 2006, it is a "must read" for every man and/or his family members who may be concerned about prostate problems. The basics are clearly discussed and many terms and procedures are explained in simple terms with detailed information on the leading conventional and alternative methods in an integrative approach. Dr. Katz explains it all, and the book could even be given to your doctor so he or she may better understand your needs. In fact, Dr. Andrew Weil states, "This is the one essential guide to prostate health. I recommend it to my patients and I follow the recommendations in it myself."

There are many leading dietary supplements that have been shown to aid in prostate diseases. One of the leading supplements is saw palmetto berry extract. Saw palmetto berries are effective in treating BPH, but one must be careful to get a good quality product at a proper dose. In 1990 the natural medicine *Pygeum africanum*, or Pygeum arrived in the U.S. Phygeum is used for bladder dysfunction and works well along with saw palmetto. Phygeum has become one of the urologists' drugs of choice in France and other European nations. Nettle root is another botanical that relieves the stinging, prickling sensations of prostate infection and enlargement. It actually has its origins in Native American Indian history. Flower pollen or Cernilton® is a flower pollen extract that has been on the European market for over 30 years and is manufactured by a Swedish company AB Cernelle. It has a relaxant effect on the smooth muscle that surrounds the urethra and has been reported to slow the growth of prostate cells.

Beta-Sistosterol is a “high-end” plant fat that is found in the foods we eat. Moducare is a leading brand of the sterols and related complexes that have been shown to greatly reduce BPH and the incidence of cancer. Not only does Beta-Sistosterol and the other complexes aid in balancing the immune system (i.e. autoimmune diseases) they also help to reduce your cholesterol levels. Pumpkin seed, another Native American Indian medicine for prostate problems, has been greatly studied in Europe. In Europe today, pumpkin seed oil is a widely used therapy for urinary symptoms of BPH and to calm an overactive bladder. Pumpkin seed oil is very healing for the bladder muscles and even aids in pets with leaky bladders. The latest research in March of 2006 from UCLA is also promising for the pomegranate. Drinking a glass of pomegranate juice every day could slow the growth of the cancer. Pomegranate is a rich source of antioxidants and many other health claims are also being made along with more research.

The leading vitamins and minerals for the prostate are Vitamin B6 and Zinc. B6 and Zinc work together to rebalance the body’s hormones and build testosterone. Essential fatty acids or Omega 3’s are just that; essential. Your body cannot produce them and must get them from an outside source. The leading sources of Omega 3’s are flax and fish oils. There are many varieties, brands, and combinations so if you are confused consult a qualified health professional to explain your options. Omega 3’s help to reduce the size of the prostate by reducing inflammation. Plus, Omega 3 supplementation also addresses many of the other “diseases of aging” including heart, brain, and digestive diseases. There is also a lot of information and research on the fibrous component of flax called lignan. Lignan has been shown to reduce hormone dependant cancers and even slow the growth of cancer between diagnosis and surgery.

Many times herbs and nutrients are combined together so you don’t have to take a lot of pills at one time. New Chapter makes a product called Prostate 5LX, which Dr. Katz highly recommends. Other brands that have a well-rounded, or complete formula, of high quality at a reasonable price are Prostate Support from NOW and Dr. Holt’s physician formulated Prostate Naturally. Usually, you may take many supplements in combination or add additional nutritional dietary supplements to your regimen as needed. Remember though, to always let your qualified health care practitioner know when you take supplements especially if you are on any prescription medications.

If you do have prostate cancer there are many Chemoprevention and Holistic treatments recommended by Dr. Katz. One of the newest and leading ones is New Chapter’s Zyflamend. Zyflamend contains at least 78 known inflammation-inhibiting constituents from 10 anti-inflammatory herbs. There are many pathways that give rise to prostate inflammation. The best known and most effective are the COX (cyclooxygenase) and LO (lipoxygenase), which are basically enzymes that lead to the inflammatory process. The latest science and research indicates that if you can safely stop the specific COX-2 and 5LO inflammatory enzymes you can slow or even stop prostate cancer.

After you have been diagnosed with BPH there is another word you may hear from your doctor, PIN or prostatic intraepithelial neoplasia. PIN isn’t cancer, but it is a harbinger of the disease. PIN can only be discovered with a needle biopsy. PIN coexists with cancer in more than 85 percent of cases. PIN is a very early warning that prostate cancer is a possibility. Unfortunately, when PIN is detected conventional medicine, or allopathy has no treatment and usually a “watchful waiting” is recommended. According to Dr. Katz what we can do is use nutrients and herbs to decrease the inflammation that spurs PIN. In late June 2006, Dr. Katz gave a presentation at the National Cancer Institute in Washington in which biopsies of one patient in the ongoing Columbia PIN clinical study on Zyflamend actually showed reversal of the PIN. This Phase One clinical trial is ongoing so visit the recommended web sites for further updates.

Other leading holistic therapies for men with prostate cancer are *Boswellia* or frankincense (a super anti-inflammatory also mentioned in the Holy Bible), medicinal mushrooms, mushroom extracts like AHCC (active hexose correlated compound), GCP or genistein combined polysaccharide (a combination of soy and mushroom phytochemicals), IP6 with inositol (a common nutrient found in soy, rice, sesame, legumes, beans, corn, and whole grain), and finally Prostabel (a natural blend of two herbal extracts). There are many, many more alternative options for helping prevent and relieving prostate problems. Some other alternatives that are worthy of mention are acupuncture, reducing stress through meditation or relaxation techniques, yoga, adding soy and probiotics to your diet (see simple recipes), progesterone cream therapy, and environmental toxin avoidance. The bottom line is that the alternatives have other health benefits too, so if you don't get the total results you want at least you have helped your health overall. The final good news – Prostate cancer is nearly 100% survivable if detected early.

*\*This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*