4 Supplements That Can Help Prostate Cancer and Disease

by KRYSTINA OSTERMEYER

What is the Best Prostate Supplement?

According to the American Cancer Society, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in American men. They estimate that in 2021, there will be 248,530 cases of new prostate cancer, as well as 34,130 deaths caused by prostate cancer. Whether you are a man with prostate cancer, are trying to prevent prostate cancer, or you have benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), you may be wondering about the benefits of a natural remedy that reports to help the health of the prostate gland. As it turns out – there is a supplement for that! But what is the best prostate supplement?

What is a Prostate Supplement?

The prostate gland is an integral part of the male reproductive system. It is about the size of a walnut and wraps around the urethra. It also produces most of the fluid in semen.

Issues with the prostate gland, such as BPH, prostate cancer and prostatitis, can cause difficulties with urination and with sexual function. Research indicates that prostate supplements may help reduce inflammation of the prostate gland, making them an easy way to improve your health.

The problem with supplements is that they are not regulated as closely as, say, Proscar or Flomax. As such, you should discuss the use of supplements with your healthcare provider.

The Best Prostate Supplements

It is important to select a supplement that your healthcare provider is okay with you taking, as well as a supplement that may have some scientific evidence of improving prostate health. The following supplements are known to be the best-studied, and therefore may improve your prostate health.

1. Saw Palmetto

Saw palmetto is a heavily debated supplement; there are some studies that indicate a benefit in prostate health, whereas others have not shown a benefit.

Saw palmetto supplement is created from the tree of the same name; this tree grows throughout North America. Though saw palmetto may not reduce the size of your prostate, proponents of saw palmetto state that it may improve that have-to-go feeling, weak urine stream, reduce urinary urgency and help when prostate problems cause a difficulty with beginning urination.

Men who have noted a benefit from saw palmetto typically see a reduction in symptoms in four to six weeks.

2. Rye Grass

Rye grass, often in the form of rye pollen extract, may actually shrink the prostate gland.

Rye grass may also improve:

- Dribbling after urinating.
- Urinary urgency.
- Painful urination.
- Urinary frequency.
- Weak urine stream.

3. Beta-Sitosterol

Beta-sitosterol is a substance that is found in various plants such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Beta-sitosterol is thought to work by binding to the prostate gland, reducing swelling and inflammation. This does not mean that it reduces the size of the prostate gland overall.

Though beta-sitosterol likely does not reduce the size of your prostate gland, it may help with the ability to empty the urine and improve the strength of urinary flow. As a bonus, beta-sitosterol is also thought to improve heart health by reducing bad cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein, or LDL levels).

4. Pygeum

Pygeum is produced from the African plum tree. Unfortunately, this tree is overharvested due to its reported health benefits.

Research is conflicting; most research agrees that pygeum is an effective treatment for prostate conditions. However, it is unclear pygeum is effective at reducing the size of the prostate, if it improves symptoms – or both.

It may also reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer. Various studies indicate that pygeum acts on the androgen receptors, thus controlling the growth of the prostate gland.

Other Supplements

There are various supplements that have the potential for improving prostate health – but the research is still young.

Pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed extract may shrink the size of the prostate as well as improve symptoms. Research indicates that pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed extract may work best when paired with saw palmetto.

Stinging nettle is an herb may help with nocturia (waking up at night to urinate) and with urinary flow.

The following supplements may be helpful – but research is still in its infancy:

- Aqueous garlic.
- Flaxseed lignan extract.
- Selenium.
- Red clover.
- Milk thistle.
- Quercetin.
- Powdered, dried cranberry.

Benefits of Prostate Supplements for Prostate Cancer Patients

An estimated one-third of men with prostate cancer employ the use of complementary medicine, such as supplements and herbs.

Though the use of supplements and herbs is thought to be mostly harmless, there is a risk of a supplement interacting with a medication that is prescribed specifically to improve prostate cancer.

According to Harvard Health, “One of the most publicized studies on supplements and prostate cancer is the SELECT (Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial) study, which explored the use of vitamin E and selenium supplements. Preliminary studies suggested that both might reduce a man's risk of prostate cancer. Yet, the SELECT results, published in 2011 in JAMA, found that men who took vitamin E supplements had a 17% increased risk of prostate cancer compared with men who took a placebo.”

If you have prostate cancer, should you use a supplement? The answer is, of course, it depends. It may be completely safe for you to utilize a supplement. However, you should discuss with your healthcare providers.