



## ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE CHEST

# PROTECT YOUR PROSTATE

If you're like most men, you never think about your prostate. Once there's a prostate problem, though, this usually forgotten gland demands attention around the clock. An enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH) will keep you running to the bathroom day and night, causing constant discomfort. Prostate cancer can cause symptoms similar to BPH. It can also cause pain in the lower back and pelvic area or no symptoms at all. But even without any noticeable symptoms, prostate cancer can turn deadly. In fact, it's the second leading cause of cancer death in men, after lung cancer. Unfortunately, mainstream medical treatments can cause unbearable side effects, driving many men to seek out alternatives. Luckily, there are natural botanicals that can help reduce and stabilize PSA levels, decrease inflammation, stop DNA damage, and protect prostate cells.



### Pomegranate:

Pomegranate juice gets a lot of press for its bounty of health benefits, and that includes helping protect men against prostate problems. A two-year clinical trial showed that men with high PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels who drank eight ounces of pomegranate juice daily saw those levels drop by an average of 35 percent during the study period. A small group of those patients experienced a 50 percent drop in their PSA levels. In addition, the researchers reported a 12 percent decrease in cell growth along with a 17 percent increase in apoptosis. While pomegranate juice offers prostate protection, the seed oil adds even more. Pomegranate seed oil contains a unique omega-5 fatty acid called punicic acid—and pomegranate is the only known botanical source of this prostate-protecting powerhouse. Clinical research shows that the punicic acid in pomegranate extract improves PSA, significantly increasing PSA doubling time (meaning PSA levels go up more slowly). To reap the full benefits of pomegranate, look for a fruit and seed oil extract rich in omega-5 fatty acids.

### Vitamin D:

Vitamin D plays an important part in many normal cell functions, including apoptosis. New evidence shows that severe vitamin D deficiency is associated with more aggressive prostate cancer and a higher risk of recurrence. African American men, who tend to have higher rates of vitamin D deficiency, face an increased risk for prostate cancer development. While the body naturally produces vitamin D from contact with direct sunlight, this ability declines by as much as 60 percent with age. Recent research shows that nearly 85 percent of older adults have at least minor vitamin D deficiencies, and 44 percent of older men have severe deficiencies. A review of several clinical trials found that men who take vitamin D3 supplements, especially over the long-term, have reduced PSA levels, less risk of developing prostate cancer, and increased survival rates. The key lies in taking the correct form—vitamin D3—when boosting vitamin D levels. Vitamin D3 (as opposed to vitamin D2) is the form of the vitamin the body naturally synthesizes, so it offers the best absorption and the best results.

## Curcumin:

When it comes to keeping your prostate healthy and fighting prostate cancer, curcumin lands at the top of the list. Packed with powerful anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and hormone-balancing compounds, curcumin can stop prostate growth and may help lower the risk of prostate cancer. Both prostate cancer and BPH can be fueled by hormones. In the case of BPH, the prostate swells and puts pressure on the urethra. That

causes problems such as weak urine stream, difficulty fully emptying the bladder, and increased nighttime urinary urgency. Curcumin can inhibit excess androgen hormones that can spur prostate growth and BPH. Another dual protection power: Curcumin protects the prostate against the COX-2 enzyme, a compound that creates inflammation and plays a role in the formation of prostate cancer lesions. Several scientific studies confirm that

curcumin strongly inhibits COX-2 along with many other inflammatory compounds. Preliminary studies also suggest that curcumin has anti-tumor activity and may play a role in preventing the spread of cancer cells from spreading. It also activates the signals that set off cancer cell death (apoptosis). To fully benefit from curcumin, which is notoriously hard for the body to absorb, look on supplement labels for BCM-95/ Curcugreen—a clinically studied form of curcumin that has been combined with turmeric essential oil for enhanced bioavailability.



## OPCs (Oligomeric Proanthocyanidins):

OPCs possess highly potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory powers, making them a perfect addition to a healthy prostate plan. These valuable plant compounds have been thoroughly studied, particularly the OPCs found in French grape seed. In one review, researchers

noted that OPCs inhibit the activity of enzymes such as lipoxygenase and cyclooxygenase. These effects may play a role in prostate cancer prevention. OPCs also inhibit an enzyme called aromatase that spurs the production of estrogen, which may fuel the development of BPH and prostate cancer. But OPCs can only deliver these prostate-supporting actions if the body can absorb and make use of them. Some OPCs (such as tannins) are too large for the body to process.

Small OPCs dissolve in water and are highly bioavailable, which makes all the difference for prostate health. To fully benefit from OPCs' protective powers, choose a tannin-free French grape seed extract like VX1, which has been standardized to contain only small, absorbable OPCs.



### Curcumin and OPCs Together Improve BPH Symptoms



A recent clinical trial showed men with BPH who took a supplement containing both curcumin and OPCs saw dramatic improvements in their urinary symptoms after just one month of treatment. The patients experienced improved urinary flow and reduced bladder obstruction with no negative side effects.