

## Natural Support for Sexual Health: Effective Herbal Supplements

James P. Meschino, DC, MS

In the normal aging process, the decline in sex hormone levels and number of functioning nerve endings in the genitalia region often contribute to a reduction in sex drive, arousal capabilities, climax and intensity of pleasure-full sensations. This can become a source of frustration and disappointment that affects quality of life for many men and women over the age of 50. As a result, many people turn to [hormone replacement therapy](#) and erectile dysfunction medications to help overcome these problems. Unfortunately, hormone replacement therapy can increase the risk of breast, endometrial and prostate cancer, as well as heart attack and stroke. In addition, erectile dysfunction medication is not suitable for all men, carries risk for sudden death and does not affect libido, only performance.

In my view, before resorting to pharmaceutical drugs, individuals should first turn to natural libido- and sexual-performance-enhancing herbs, which have been shown to be safe and effective in human clinical trials. The following herbal compounds have been used individually for many years by health practitioners in various countries as therapies for low libido and sexual dysfunction. When combined into a single formulation, the synergistic effects of these herbs can exert a potent influence, helping to maximize, restore and prolong sexual desire, arousal and performance in both men and women.

### *Tribulus Terrestris* (Puncture Vine)

*Tribulus terrestris* is an herb that has been used for centuries to enhance sexual performance in men and stimulate libido in both men and women. Recent investigations have shown that *Tribulus terrestris* increases the release of nitric oxide from the lining of blood vessels and nerves that supply blood flow to the penis and clitoris. In turn, nitric oxide relaxes blood vessels, allowing greater engorgement of blood within the erectile tissues of the genitalia. This results in a firmer, longer-lasting erection in men and increased genital sensitivity in women. An important study showed that *Tribulus terrestris* supplementation in women improved libido and sexual function in 66 percent of those who originally reported low sex drive and sexual dysfunction problems.

### *Muirapuama* (Potency Wood)

*Muirapuama* extract is derived from the root of tropical Brazilian plants. Studies indicate that it can increase sexual performance (potency) and libido in men and in women. It has long been used as a powerful aphrodisiac and nerve-stimulant in South America folk medicine, where it has appeared in the Brazilian Pharmacopoeia since the 1950s. French studies demonstrated that it reversed low libido and/or erectile dysfunction problems in men within a two-week period.

In a landmark study involving 202 women with low sex drive, 65 percent of women who took a supplement containing *Muirapuama* for one month reported improvement in their sex drive and other aspects of sexual function and behavior. The researchers reported statistically significant improvements in frequency of sexual desire, sexual intercourse, and sexual fantasies, as well as in satisfaction with sex life, intensity of sexual desires, excitement of fantasies, ability to reach

orgasm, and intensity of orgasm.

#### *Tunera Aphrodisiaca* (Damiana)

Damiana is found throughout Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Its Latin name (*Tunera aphrodisiaca*) suggests its use as an aphrodisiac. In the years following the European conquest of Central and South America, damiana has been associated with improvement of sexual function in both males and females. In Holland, it is renowned for its sexual-enhancing qualities and positive effects on reproductive organs. In particular, damiana has been shown to increase the sensitivity of genital tissues. With aging, sensitivity of these tissues is often reduced due to fewer functioning nerve endings. Damiana helps to compensate for this effect, re-establishing heightened sensitivity and arousal capabilities.

#### Epimedium (Horny Goat Weed)

Epimedium, commonly known as horny goat weed, has been used by Chinese doctors for generations as a male and female aphrodisiac or libido enhancer. Many years ago, Chinese farmers noticed their goats became much friskier, demonstrating a dramatic increase in copulating behavior after grazing on this plant; thus its common name.

These observations prompted investigation into its potential to enhance human sexual desire and performance capabilities. Its exact mechanism of action is still somewhat a mystery, but it has shown success for many years in boosting sexual desire, aiding erectile function, and fighting fatigue in humans. Clinicians have long used epimedium to treat erectile dysfunction problems, to improve libido, and to restore sexual vitality.

#### *Avena Sativa* (Wild Oat)

*Avena sativa* or wild oat has been shown to nourish nerves, increasing tactile sensation of the genital area and increasing pleasure. In a study conducted at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, men experienced a 22 percent increase in genital sensation and a 36 percent increase in frequency of orgasms, and women experienced a 15 percent increase in genital sensation and a 29 percent increase in the frequency of orgasms, following regular supplementation with *Avena sativa*. The phrase “sowing one’s wild oats” is derived from the sexual-enhancement effects derived from *Avena sativa*.

#### *Lepidium Meyennii Walp* (Maca)

*Maca* is a native Peruvian plant that has been used traditionally to enhance sexual performance in both men and women. Its libido-stimulating and sexual-enhancement properties are attributed to its sterolic compounds, polyunsaturated fatty acids and alkaloids. Placebo-controlled studies in humans and animals have demonstrated a positive effect on sexual performance and increased libido following supplementation with maca. In human studies, libido and sexual performance were followed during 12 continuous weeks of maca supplementation compared to placebo, which confirmed its libido-enhancing qualities. Anecdotal comments from doctors who recommend maca suggest it is highly effective at improving male sexual performance and is touted by some to be the “female Viagra” due to its libido-enhancement effects on women.

The combination of *Tribulus terrestris*, *Muira puama*, damiana, epimedium, *Avena sativa* and maca represent a safe and natural approach to enhancing sexual desire, performance and satisfaction. Each of these herbs has enjoyed a long history of use for these purposes, and recent clinical trials have supported their safety and efficacy. As hormone replacement therapy and erectile dysfunction drugs are associated with significant potential health concerns, individuals wishing to combat age-

related decline in libido and performance - and those wishing to enhance their overall level of sexual satisfaction and performance - should, in my view, first consider use of these natural agents.

#### Selected Resources

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