



A PROACTIVE APPROACH

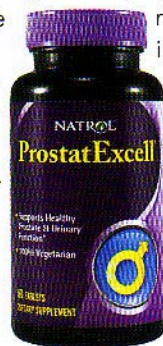
to Prostate Health

BY MELISSA KVIDAHL

As most natural products retailers can attest, the majority of supplement buyers are women. Whether it's because of the many targeted women's health products on the market or simply because despite changing gender roles, women remain premier shoppers for the family, men aren't typically as present in the supplement retail scene as women are.

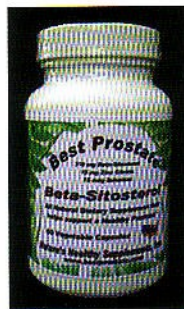
But, as is often the case these days, change is in the making.

"According to the Natural Marketing Institute, men now make one third of dietary supplement purchases," pointed out Cheryl Sturm, director of marketing at Embria Health Sciences (Ankeny, IA). "This is up significantly from years past."



And while sports supplements and popular cholesterol-battling omega-3s may be taking center stage for men in the lay press, natural products retailers know that many male shoppers are turning to supplements to potentially prevent the onset of prostate cancer or fight the symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or the enlarging of the prostate.

According to the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC), BPH affects more than half of men in their 60s and as many as 90 percent of men in their 70s and 80s, leading to symptoms such as more frequent urination and urgency; a hesitant, interrupted or weak stream; and leaking or dribbling.



And, as medical practitioners open their minds to the integration of natural remedies with conventional medication, supplement manufacturers also take into consideration how their products can work best with pharmaceuticals.

"We don't believe in shunning pharmaceuticals because, in some conditions, they are absolutely necessary to save lives," agreed Eileen Sheets, managing director at Bioforce USA (Ghent, NY).

"The theory and practice of integrating specific dietary supplements that are shown by science to provide support is quite sensible."

Though certainly not all-inclusive of the prostate offerings in the supplement category, there are generally two routes

a retailer can take when recommending a prostate health supplement to a customer: selenium or saw palmetto.

Selenium

According to Stuart Reeves, PhD, director of research and development for Embria, there is an increasing interest in selenium since it is a required mineral for human health and its sources are generally well defined.

Embria Health Sciences' eXselen is an all-natural selenium yeast, grown in such a way as to produce a very high level of selenomethionine, said Reeves. "Over 98 percent of the selenium is in an organic form, and over 70 percent of this is in the form of selenomethionine, the most bioavailable form of selenium.

"Research showed a reduction in prostate cancer from men taking a form of selenium yeast that contained high levels of selenomethionine and other organic selenium compounds," he continued. "The advantage of a selenium product is that selenium is an essential mineral, and it has overall benefits on the antioxidant and immune systems of the body, as well as its effects on prostate."

Also utilizing the preventative benefits of selenium is Natrol, Inc. (Chatsworth, CA), which features Seleno Excell® High Selenium Yeast, a branded ingredient from Cypress Systems (Fresno, CA), in its ProstatExcell® product. The ingredient is a natural food form of organically bound selenium, shown to reduce prostate cancer by 63 percent, said Paul A. Willis, CEO and president of Cypress Systems, citing a study by the National Cancer Institute.

Nature's Healthy Supplements, Inc. (North Hollywood, CA) manufactures Best Prostate™ to support prostate health and offer a solution to the symptoms of an enlarged prostate. "Best Prostate is unique from other prostate formulas in that we use an all vegetable capsule, unlike almost all other prostate health supplements which are either a caplet or tablet, and require unnatural binders to hold them together," said Jerry Cady, the company's president, also noting that the capsules can be opened and mixed with food to accommodate individuals who are unable to swallow

tablets or capsules. "We also choose a flow agent, or excipient, that is of strict vegetable origin, unlike other supplements in this category," he added.

Each capsule of Best Prostate contains 310mg beta-sitosterol, 15mg zinc and 15mcg selenium. It contains no other nutrients, Cady said, so it won't interfere with multivitamin or other supplement use. "As men age into their 50s, 60s, 70s and older, there is a natural decline in zinc," he added. "Studies reveal that zinc deficiency may be a cause of prostate enlargement, since prostate tissues are highly dependent on zinc to maintain health and integrity."



Saw Palmetto

According to Bioforce's Sheets referencing *Natural Foods Merchandiser*, sales of saw palmetto are up three percent overall. "Saw palmetto works by reducing swelling of the prostate and thereby reducing or eliminating the symptoms, which improves the quality of life for men," she said. "It does not solve the issue, and if you stop taking it, symptoms will gradually return. But taking it is an investment in your wellbeing."

The variety of saw palmetto products for prostate health on the market today is an indication of this rising popularity.

From Bioforce USA is Prostan, a one-a-day organic saw palmetto product. Bioforce dries the saw palmetto berries gently before shipment to Switzerland, where they are then extracted immediately and vacuum dried to concentrate the dose into a one-a-day soft gel. "We find that compliance is very good with such an easy dose," Sheets said.

A 2004 Swiss clinical trial on Prostan examined the effects of the supplement on 364 patients diagnosed with BPH symptoms. The men took one capsule per day (320mg saw palmetto extract) of Prostan for eight weeks. "Doctors reported that men with mild BPH symptoms showed 42 percent improvement in their symptoms after eight weeks; men with medium BPH symptoms showed a 37.8 percent improvement in their symptoms," Sheets explained. "Prostan supplementation was even successful in the patient group with

severe BPH symptoms. In this group, 95 patients with severe BPH reported a 30 percent reduction in the severity of their symptoms at the end of the study."

From Enzymes, Inc. (Parkville, MO) is WellZymes™ Prostate Health, which is formulated with saw palmetto, pumpkin seed, pygeum bark and hydrangea root. "Saw palmetto and pygeum bark are included for urinary health, specifically excessive nighttime urination," said Bryan Scribner, the company's marketing coordinator. "Pumpkin seed and hydrangea root are included to promote kidney and bladder health, as well as proper urethral function."

The product's enzyme blend, pHydroProtease™, works with the body's natural inflammatory processes to regulate swelling, improve circulation and increase nutrient availability to promote prostate health.

Perhaps most purely, Natrol's Saw Palmetto has one active ingredient: 160mg saw palmetto extract (*Serenoa repens*) berries. Each bottle contains 30 soft gels, and men should take one gel twice daily with meals for optimum performance.

Yet despite the strides taken in the natural products arena, nothing can replace an annual visit to the doctor to detect any signs of prostate cancer.

"Many men are still under the impression that if they don't feel they have symptoms that nothing is wrong," warned Sheets. "Retailers should absolutely encourage their male customers to have an annual prostate exam, starting at around age 40."

"Natural products, a proactive healthy lifestyle and regular checkups bring the reality of prevention into men desiring to manage their prostate health," agreed Willis. "There is no silver bullet in simply taking a natural product. That being said, various natural ingredients and products can be a vital part of a preventative lifestyle." VR



For More Information:

- Bioforce USA, (800) 641-7555
- Cypress Systems, Inc., (559) 229-7850
- Embria Health Sciences, (515) 963-9100
- Enzymes, Inc., (816) 746-6461
- Natrol, Inc., (818) 739-6000
- Nature's Healthy Supplements, Inc., (888) 768-3836