

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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Does Male Menopause Really Exist?

Presented by:

Can middle age men suffer something comparable to female menopause? Some medical experts believe so. But the debate still continues as to what exactly constitutes the definition of andropause – the male version of menopause. The term andropause is not recognized by several prominent medical associations. Many medical doctors say andropause is actually *late-onset hypogonadism*, which is a deficiency of the hormone testosterone in older men.

When she goes through menopause, a woman's reproductive system shuts down and she experiences a dramatic drop in hormones. Men do not have a major dip in their hormones and their reproductive system never completely stops functioning. After the age of 30, men's testosterone levels drop about 10% per decade. Low amounts of testosterone can lead to health problems. For example, your chiropractor will confirm low testosterone can leave men at a greater risk for osteoporosis.



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What Are the Symptoms?

Men with low testosterone may complain about depression, low energy, poor concentration and memory problems. It is usually accompanied by sexual issues, including erectile dysfunction and low libido. Men who are most likely to develop andropause have the following risk factors:

- Smoking
- Alcohol use
- Drug use (prescription & non prescription)
- High blood pressure
- Lack of exercise
- Poor diet
- Psychological issues

Mysteries of Andropause

Puzzling factors remain about andropause. Why do some men develop symptoms and other do not? And why do some men have symptoms but have normal levels of testosterone.

Hormonal health is a complex science. Deficiency and imbalances in hormones may affect one person differently from another. Health specialists may have different criteria as to what qualifies as low testosterone levels.

Exercise of the Week

Lateral Glide in a Reverse Bridge Position

Start: Lie on your back on the ball in the Reverse Bridge position as shown. Arms are straight out to the side, palms up

Exercise: Keeping your body as still as possible, shuffle your feet over to one side, until one shoulder comes off the ball. Stabilize in this position for 1-2 counts, then shuffle back to the starting position. Pause, then shuffle your feet over to the other side & hold. Repeat 6-12 times per side, alternating with each repetition.



The symptoms can also be connected to other health conditions. For example, low mood, lack of energy and sexual problems can be caused by depression. Various medications and some diseases can serve up the same symptoms.

Changes to our environment, diet and lifestyle play vital roles in hormonal health. The obesity epidemic throughout much of the Western world impacts testosterone. Fat in the abdominal area is biologically active, which increases levels of the hormone estrogen. This can lower men's testosterone levels and throw hormones out of balance.

Researchers also point to increased exposure to toxins in our environment. Pesticides and growth drugs in our food supply contain chemicals that mimic estrogen. Industrial chemicals and materials may also be rich in xenoestrogens.

Diagnosis

If you have symptoms of low testosterone, consult your physician. Because other health conditions can have similar symptoms, your doctor may request some medical tests. This usually includes a blood analysis to determine your testosterone levels.

Treatment

If you are diagnosed with this condition, your physician may recommend boosting testosterone with a topical gel, skin patch, injections or tablets. Unfortunately, not all men who receive testosterone treatment see benefits. For many years, doctors were concerned that testosterone treatment might increase the risk of prostate cancer.

Recent research indicates there is little evidence to support this theory.

Aside from medications, science reveals that regular exercise and proper diet can help improve some of the problems associated with andropause. Cardiovascular exercise helps your body keep hormones balanced. In one study, men who did 45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise 5 days a week saw a healthy boost to their free testosterone levels.¹ Weight training is also often recommended as it helps develop muscle mass, which may shrink from low testosterone.

Follow a healthy diet with appropriate amounts of fats, carbohydrates and protein. Some fitness experts believe you should consume more fat and protein than carbs for enhanced testosterone production. However, this theory is still controversial.

Research published last year by the European Journal of Applied Physiology showed that subjects who participate in regular weight training while on a low-carb diet actually saw a considerable decrease in testosterone production. When the body uses fat as energy, it also increases the production of cortisol. This hormone boosts the development of abdominal fat, which in turn suppresses testosterone production.²



Quote to Inspire

"Inside myself is a place where I live alone and that's where you renew your springs that never dry up."

- Pearl S. Buck

References and sources:

1. Effects of Endurance Exercise on Free Testosterone Concentration and the Binding Affinity of Sex Hormone Binding Globulin (SHBG) - *Int J Sports Med* 1998; 19(1): 12-15
2. Lane, AR, Duke, JW, Hackney, AC. Influence of dietary carbohydrate intake on the free testosterone: cortisol ratio responses to short-term intensive exercise training. *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 2010; 108(6):1125-113

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