



WHEN THE WATER WORKS DON'T WORK OR BENIGN PROSTATE HYPERPLASIA (BPH)

As men get older, concerns about the prostate gland can arise, and it is important to have an understanding of what normal changes to expect and when to consider seeking health advice.

For many men, getting up at night is very normal, however if you are getting up more than once, or there is less flow, or the flow is stop/start then it may be worth getting some good advice. There is considerable confusion when it comes to the prostate and this month I hope to clarify some of these issues.

Most men will experience enlarging of the prostate gland as they get older. In fact, by age 60, 50% of men will have some signs of the issue, while by 85 years 90% will have signs of the condition while about 33% will need some form of treatment. BPH is not an early sign of cancer, and in most cases the condition does not require urgent treatment, but it is advised to keep monitoring the situation and get advice.

Generally it has been the practice to recommend a PSI (prostate-specific antigen) test to provide an indication of whether cancer is an issue, however, this has now become contentious as the PSI has been found to be less reliable as an indicator as once was thought. Apparently even men with a low PSI can still have prostate cancer and in the research I conducted there is debate as to whether invasive (Standard of Care) treatment has increased the life expectancy of sufferers.

Surgery and some other medical interventions can have undesirable side effects such as effects on sexual function so needless to say quality of life is a big consideration. PSI levels may also be elevated due to other issues such as prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) and Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) as an enlarged prostate can cause retention of urine which can lead to a UTI. A biopsy is generally the only way to see for sure if there is any cancer and this is only done if the concern is elevated.

Cancer and the reliability of the PSI test aside, the daily reality of BPH can be very frustrating. Symptoms include slowness, dribbling, hesitation to start, frequent urination, or sudden urgent need. There are many things you can do to assist urinary health and these include good amounts of water, asparagus which is high in Zinc (beneficial in Prostate conditions) and pearl barley for example in soups, are very good for flushing the system. Beans such as red kidney beans (most beans are great, notice how they are kidney shaped!) and green tea. Keeping a diet high in good whole foods and low in junk food is very important. Bad fats and high sugar/salt foods aggravate many conditions, especially any kind of inflammation.

Written by: Dr Angela Palmer - Kinglake Chinese Medicine
Chinese Medicine CMRBV REG AH/1347
Member AACMA 2154

Practical Preventable Medicine

Chinese Medicine is very effective in the treatment of BPH. There are a number of formulas that are very effective in increasing urinary flow, reducing inflammation and strengthening the kidneys and bladder and reducing the swelling of the prostate. Saw Pimento has had a fair bit of research showing good results, however I always recommend talking to your health professional for the right herbs for your condition.

Until next time
Stay well
Dr Angela Palmer

Written by: Dr Angela Palmer - Kinglake Chinese Medicine
Chinese Medicine CMRBV REG AH/1347
Member AACMA 2154