



Holistic Health for Men

Holistic medicine

In the practice of holistic medicine, the whole person is considered, not just a handful of body parts. What if you had a vintage automobile that you drove for years but never had it tuned-up, nor had filters and belts replaced? Now you want it to run like the good ol' days. Could the mechanic get some of the problems fixed and attend to the other issues later? In holistic medicine, we don't just check one part of the body — all problems need to be addressed. If a middle-aged man took testosterone or DHEA supplements, he would probably feel better, but to become healthier, we need to look at the whole system. Exercise, diet, supplements and hormones all play important roles in overall male health.

The aging male

Men who are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and up may have noticed a gradual decline in their strength, vigor and sexual performance. Despite men who take care of their health, testosterone and other hormones gradually diminish. DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) are hormones that support masculinity, strength, libido and sexual abilities. Many aging males can experience a variety of body changes. Some have gained belly weight by eating too many carbohydrates or frequent drinking. All of these things, combined with low hormone levels, may have lead to abdominal weight gain, higher cholesterol, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, or diabetes. Others experience chronic acid reflux and take daily anti-acids to relieve the symptoms. Restoring normal hormone levels can help reverse or reduce these problems.

Sometimes your body requires additional ways to resume normal hormones. Other things that may need to be considered:

Diet and metabolism

As male hormones plummet, metabolism slows down and calories don't burn as fast they used to. We tend to eat more and exercise less. Life stresses can increase our craving for high carbohydrate foods. The carbohydrates we eat and drink increasingly get deposited around our middles as abdominal fat. Abdominal fat changes testosterone into estrogen and excess estrogen also increases cravings for carbohydrates. This causes a vicious cycle where stress, central obesity, higher estrogen, and eating more carbohydrates all contribute to further increasing central obesity. An aging digestive system can lose some of its ability to make digestive enzymes, bile and stomach acid, resulting in acid reflux. Supplemental digestive enzymes are available, as are stomach acid enhancers.

It also helps to reduce the consumption of heavy animal fats, and substitute easier to digest fish or chicken. Eating more vegetables and fruit will reduce the workload on your gall bladder, promote natural digestive function, and reduce acid reflux.

Vitamins, minerals and other supplements

As we age, our digestive tracts are less able to absorb many vitamins and minerals. We all need to take supplements. Vitamin B-12, calcium, magnesium and iron need evidence of stomach acid so they can be absorbed. Calcium is important for bone and nervous system health and adequate Vitamin D levels are also needed for calcium absorption. It is now known that people with higher levels of Vitamin D have lower rates of colon, prostate, breast and other cancers. Georgia Hormones can measure your Vitamin B-12 and Vitamin D levels to determine if you require additional supplements. A good quality multi-vitamin and multi-mineral supplement can supply the nutrients lacking in small increments. Additional nutrients are needed in fairly large amounts and will not fit into a single daily vitamin tablet. They include Vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, and fish oil fatty acids **EPA and DHA**. For a complete list, go to [Essential Dietary Supplements](#).

Other supplements

Many people take other supplements, herbs and teas for various purposes. These include CoQ10, glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, licorice, Dong Quai, and many others. Many books and online articles are available to cover the use of those products.

Exercise

Perhaps no single life change is as important as regular exercise. Our bodies are designed for motion. Without regular exercise the heart and lungs, muscles, bones and joints degenerate. Using our muscles burn calories and fat. Borderline diabetics frequently use medications to lower blood sugar but exercise alone can often do a better job. Aerobic exercise helps burn excess fat and includes walking, hiking, jogging, bicycle riding, using a treadmill, elliptical machine and others. Heart and breathing rates rise and, with training, these activities can be performed for extended periods of time. Aerobic exercise helps improve heart and lung function and strengthens supporting bones.

Stretching

This is very beneficial. Consider yoga, Tai Chi or Chi Gong. They are all good stretching exercises. A yoga master once said, "You don't get old and stiff, you get stiff and then old." These practices also improve posture and balance, reduce the likelihood of falls and broken bones. Muscle building and toning improves strength and burns calories. Testosterone will help the muscles and bones respond but they will not grow or stay strong without weight bearing exercises. Weight training helps keep bones strong, further reducing risk of fracture.

Sleep

Adequate sleep is needed to restore strength, mental health and resistance to disease. Restoring testosterone and DHEA can reduce those nighttime trips to the bathroom and enhance restful sleep.

Dental hygiene

Investing in good teeth is vitally important for a long healthy life. Our intestines need healthy fiber to function properly, which means regularly eating rough, raw vegetables, e.g., carrots, celery, cabbage, dark green lettuces, and broccoli. Strong, healthy teeth are essential for being able to chew raw vegetables. Additional supplements that may help include calcium, magnesium and Vitamin D. Chronic gum infections can cast bacteria into the blood stream, which can inflame plaque in the coronary arteries. Sick gums can lead to increased heart attack rates. It is essential to brush regularly (electric toothbrushes help kill bacteria), floss and to get regular dental check-ups. A dental implant could add more to your life than a new flat screen HDTV.

Alcohol

Although red wine has been suggested to be beneficial for the heart, excess consumption does more harm than good. Beer contains high carbohydrate levels and can increase abdominal weight. Ideally, alcohol consumption should be limited to no more than one half drink per day.

Drink water

We all need to get enough water. Instead of water, many people drink soft drinks, energy sports drinks and juices. Some may contain a lot of sugar, salt, caffeine, artificial sweeteners or other harmful chemicals. *We just need plain water!* Keep drinking water throughout the day.

Take time to make new changes

With patience and self-care, Georgia Hormones can help you gradually reduce harmful habits and encourage positive lifestyle changes. You should feel some improvement right away. We will help by supplementing hormones, vitamins and minerals and can discuss diet, exercise, sleep habits and recreation. We can even talk about sex.

No one is immortal — we all age. Our goal is to help maintain your health and vigor, so that you can enjoy a fulfilling, active and worthwhile old age.