



saw palmetto

FOR PROSTATE SUPPORT

Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is a small dwarf tree native to the West Indies and the southeast coast of North America. The Indians used the berries of this plant for food and medicinally to treat a variety of respiratory, kidney and bladder problems. It has been used to treat colds, bronchitis, asthma, irritated mucosal membranes, bladder infection and prostate problems in men. Saw palmetto was once highly touted as an aphrodisiac. Extracts of Saw palmetto have been successfully used to treat benign enlargement of the prostate gland.

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Saw palmetto berries contain about 1.5% of an oil composed of free fatty acids and ethyl esters of these acids. The free fatty acid content of this oil is composed of capric, caprylic, caproic, lauric, palmitic, and oleic acids. The ethyl ester content of this oil is primarily composed of fatty acids and sterols including beta-sitosterol. Other constituents of the berries including tannins, resins, lipase and a variety of sugars.

A purified Saw palmetto extract containing 25 to 95% fatty acid content has been successfully used to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH for short. The concentrated extract has been shown to inhibit the enzyme 5-alpha-reductase, which is responsible for the

conversion of the hormone testosterone to dihydro-testosterone. The standardized extract also inhibits the hormone dihydro-testosterone from attaching to the prostate cell nucleus. It is currently believed that increased levels of the hormone dihydro-testosterone is responsible for the abnormal enlargement of prostate tissue. The extract of Saw palmetto decreases the production and activation of this hormone in the prostate. The net result is a decrease in prostate gland size.

In a study of 110 outpatients with benign prostatic hyperplasia, 55 were treated with a standardized extract of Saw palmetto, versus the other 55 individuals who were treated with placebo for 30 days. The group treated with Saw palmetto extract showed a significant improvement in symptoms of BPH. Saw palmetto extract was well tolerated and no side effects were reported. Researchers concluded that Saw palmetto was effective in treating benign prostatic hyperplasia. In other studies, the effectiveness of Saw palmetto was compared against the standard medical drug for this condition called Proscar. Saw palmetto extract was as effective as Proscar in alleviating the symptoms associated with prostate enlargement and was much less toxic than conventional drug.

It is very important to realize that all the clinical research conducted on Saw palmetto has been conducted on a Saw palmetto extract containing 25 to 95% fatty acids. This is a highly concentrated standardized extract that contains other minor ingredients found in the crude plant. A divided dose of 150 milligrams of



the standardized extract of Saw palmetto is recommended three times per day. If the patient were to consume raw Saw palmetto berries, he would have to consume more than 15 grams of ripe, dried berries each day to get the equivalent dose of the standardized extract.

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