

## **Testosterone: Regain Your Vitality**

**By Eli J. Hammer, MD**

Never has the topic of testosterone been on the minds of men more than today. Through the media and the Internet, men over 35 are becoming educated on the effects of a declining testosterone level. These baby boomers are increasingly refusing to accept the changes they see in their minds and body as just getting older. Unfortunately, these cries for help most often fall upon the deaf ears of their primary care physician. When these men complain to their physicians about fatigue, weight gain, loss of muscle, decreased libido and erectile function, and depression, they do not want to hear their physicians say, "join the club!" Yet, many of these physicians are feeling those same changes, but are also at a loss to know where to turn or what to do.

As men enter their 30s, testosterone levels begin to fall. This slow, but steady, decline in serum eventually will lead to the signs and symptoms of what is referred to as andropause. Some men are fortunate and maintain adequate testosterone levels well into their 50s. However, a larger percentage of men are less fortunate, often feeling the effects of lower testosterone as early as age 35. Sadly, most men are unaware of

the relationship of low testosterone to the classic signs and symptoms of andropause.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

Signs and symptoms of andropause are not limited to but include:

- fatigue
- reduced libido
- decreased sexual performance
- depression
- aches and pains
- irritability
- sweating or flushing
- loss of muscle
- gain of fat (especially around the middle)
- worsening memory
- difficulties at work
- thinning bones

Women have been receiving hormone restoration for decades. Finally, men are speaking out and demanding the same. Natural testosterone has been around for half a century. It is very different from the synthetic anabolic steroids made popular in the '70s by athletes and bodybuilders. Natural testosterone has a very safe clinical record. It will revitalize men that are suffering from the classic testosterone deficiency signs and symptoms. Sadly, however, most physicians are not aware of, or trained in, testosterone therapy and are reluctant to prescribe it. What men are left to do is seek this help desperately through radio and

newspaper ads selling their "testosterone-like drug" which contains no testosterone and is of little to no value.

### **The Key to Vitality**

Testosterone is the main sex hormone in men. It is produced in the testicles and has a wide variety of functions. Testosterone builds muscle, improves erections, regulates sex drive, increases energy, improves mental sharpness and enhances the quality of life. Without sufficient amounts of testosterone, men begin feeling the signs and symptoms of andropause (testosterone deficiency). Natural testosterone is often wrongly confused with "anabolic steroids." These steroids are synthetic, non-natural, very potent derivatives of testosterone used for one purpose, building muscle. They are very toxic and do not have the beneficial health qualities of natural testosterone.

**"The decline of testosterone leads to the symptoms of andropause."**

Genuine natural testosterone is widely available, but requires a physician's prescription. It can be administered orally, intramuscularly or through the skin. Oral testosterone is toxic to the liver and should never be administered. However, injections are an excellent way to receive this

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hormone although they need to be given more once per month to be effective, a standard used by most physicians. Given weekly, testosterone injections are a highly effective mode of administration, however, there may be obvious compliance issues. For those reasons, a transdermal, quickly absorbed cream is a great option. Once a day application makes compliance simple.

**“Nutritious food provides the most pronounced effect on a man's health.”**

### **Megabucks**

Enormous amounts of money are spent each year by men to improve their health, appearance and vitality. Unfortunately, most of those dollars are not well spent. In 2001, 629 million visits to alternative medicine providers tallied more than 12 billion dollars in revenue. This shows how little faith people have in their traditional medicine physician and medical insurance. Those that did see their primary care physician spent more than 1.5 billion dollars on the prescription Viagra alone, and received another 200,000 new scripts for Propecia, a hair restoration drug, that same year. These statistics are significant increases from prior years.

Americans spend about \$15 billion a year on health

supplements, double the money spent on all over-the-counter drugs for pain, colds and the flu. In addition, experts say about 75 million people now take a health supplement before they see a physician. As you might expect, these health supplements were likely "prescribed" by a health store employee, a suggestive advertisement in the back of a magazine, the omnipresent Internet or selected by the patient. In most cases, these products are practically worthless or inappropriate to achieve the patient's goals. However, in knowledgeable hands, these same supplements can tremendously enhance one's health, vitality and quality of life.

### **Beyond Testosterone**

As you have read, testosterone restoration can make huge differences in a man's life. However, there is more to staying healthy and happy. Along with testosterone, other necessary hormones are declining in midlife years. The fall in serum levels of human growth hormone, thyroid hormone, DHEA, pregnenolone and melatonin also occur, which have their own deleterious effects on the human mind and body. There is often a very strong synergy between these hormones. Balancing all of them together brings on a more significant difference than using them in isolation.

Although most men do not want to hear it, it is also tremendously important to eat well to achieving optimal health. Nutritious food provides the quickest and most pronounced effect on a man's health and appearance. Proper diet enhances the production of these "good" hormones and the decrease of the "bad" hormones (cortisol and insulin). These changes occur within minutes to hours of a meal and can be dramatic. What is a proper diet? It is surely not what the government has been pushing on the American people for the last 20 years through the food pyramid, which is currently under review. The closest thing to a perfect diet is the Zone Diet, developed by Dr. Barry Sears. It consists of what are called low glycemic carbohydrates, which do not cause large rises in insulin levels. These are generally fruits and vegetables. Breads, pasta, rice, and simple sugars are the foods to avidly avoid. Combine the good carbohydrates with plenty of protein and monounsaturated fats (extra virgin olive oil is the best), and major changes in your hormone and body composition will be seen within days.

Exercise is also a crucial ingredient to maintaining your health and muscle through those later years. Both aerobic and resistant training are essential for maximum results. Aerobic exercise

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provides for cardiovascular conditioning and fat loss, while resistant training helps build muscle and strengthen bones. The timing of these exercises is equally important in accomplishing your particular goals, whether for fat loss, muscle building or toning. A well-versed medical professional or personal trainer can help most men begin a regimen that suits their needs.

Last, it is impossible to consume enough food daily to meet the needs of your mind and body. Essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants maintain optimal health and prevent many age-related diseases. The purpose of your diet is to regulate insulin, take in adequate protein, and choose the right fats, not to search out these supplements in your food. The only way to meet these needs is to take supplements in the form of pills and capsules. Often, a handful is needed to provide for all ones needs.

**"Most people are fooled into thinking that taking 100% of the RDA is all that's needed."**

Unfortunately, most people are fooled into thinking that taking 100% of the RDA is all that's needed. The RDA stands for "the recommended daily allowance" to prevent the "disease of deficiency."

So, if you don't want to get Scurvy, take 60 mg of Vitamin C daily. If you are looking to prevent heart disease and cancer, the correct dose is about 25 times that, or 1500 mg. Also, men and women are quite different. Men's supplements should meet the needs specific to men, such as maintaining prostate health, supporting muscle growth, enhancing sexual performance and preventing heart disease.

### **Vitality Project**

The Vitality Project For Men, co-founded by Eli Hammer, MD and Jim McGuire, was created to fill a void in men's health care. It is a destination medical facility for men over 40 who want to maintain, or regain, their health and experience life in a more vigorous and vital way. The Vitality Project is committed to providing those services and products that enhance how a man feels about himself, inside and out. It provides expert medical evaluation on natural testosterone restoration, weight loss, cosmetic surgery, nutrition and fitness and is a one-stop solution to common problems such as fatigue, loss of sex drive and depression.

Having your progress followed by a knowledgeable care provider is integral to the success of your testosterone therapy. It is very important to measure testosterone levels regularly to adjust the dose if need be. Also, evaluating other

important hormones, along with proper diet, exercise and supplements is crucial to get the most out of testosterone restoration. The Vitality Project specifically deals with all four of these important areas to ensure its patients remain healthy and feel and look the best they have in years. The Vitality Project offers a unique and comprehensive approach to overcoming the symptoms of andropause, as well as a complete line of private label supplements and skin care products. **PMPR**

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