

Georgia Hormones P.C.

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Holistic Male Health

Holistic Medicine: In Holistic medical practice, we consider the whole person, not just a few working parts. What if you had a vintage automobile: a 1968 Mustang Shelby GT or Firebird Formula 400? What if you drove it for years but didn't change the oil or filters, never got a tune-up, and never replaced the failing alternator, belts or battery? **Now you want the car to run like it did in the old days.** You take it to a good mechanic who does a thorough check-up. A lot of things need to be done. You say, "Can't I just replace the battery to add more power? How about if I just replace the air and oil filter?" The mechanic would just shake his head. Fixing one part is not going to help much. **All the problems need to be worked on.** In holistic medicine, we don't just check one part. You may benefit from testosterone or DHEA supplementation, but to feel healthier, we need to look at the whole system. Exercise, diet, supplements and hormones all play important roles in overall male health. **Have you decided that it is time to turn things around?**

The Aging Male: If you now are in your 40s, 50s, 60s or beyond, despite having taken good care of your health, you may have noted a gradual decline in strength, vigor and sexual performance. This may be due to a gradual decline in testosterone and other hormones. As we age, men lose testosterone and DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone), hormones that support masculinity, strength, libido and sexual abilities. **True, bioidentical hormones** are now available and can be used to restore hormone balance and enhance health. Perhaps, though, you have not been a perfect guardian of your body. Maybe you have gained some weight, especially around your middle. Perhaps you drink too much beer, wine, or soft drinks, or eat too much bread, pasta, potatoes, or sweets. Perhaps overeating has led to chronic acid reflux and you take medications to suppress stomach acid. All these things, combined with low hormone levels, may have lead to abdominal weight gain, higher cholesterol, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, or diabetes. Restoring normal hormone levels can help reverse or reduce these problems, but it may not be sufficient. Lets look at some of the other things that may need to be done.

Diet and Metabolism: As our male hormones drop, metabolism slows down and we don't burn calories as fast as we used to. We tend to exercise less and eat more. Life stresses can increase our cravings for high carbohydrate foods. The carbohydrates we eat and drink increasingly tend to be deposited around our middles as abdominal fat. Abdominal fat changes testosterone into estrogen. Excess estrogen also increases cravings for carbohydrates. This causes a vicious cycle where **stress, central obesity, higher estrogen, and eating more carbs**, all contribute to further increases in central obesity. An aging digestive system can lose some of its ability to make digestive enzymes, bile and stomach acid. Poor digestion causes **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, enhance natural digestive function, and reduce acid reflux.

Vitamins, Minerals and other Supplements: As we age, our digestive tracks are less able to absorb many vitamins and minerals, just when our needs are increasing. **We all need to take supplements.** Vitamin B-12, calcium, magnesium and iron all require acid in the stomach to be absorbed. Calcium is important for bone and nervous system health. 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. We can measure your vitamin B-12 and vitamin D to see if you need extra supplements. A good quality multivitamin and multi-mineral supplement can supply those nutrients that are needed in relatively small quantities. Some

nutrients, however, are needed in fairly large amounts. They won't all fit into a single daily vitamin tablet. **Vitamin C, calcium, magnesium,** and the fish oil fatty acids **EPA and DHA** will require additional tablets. For a complete list, see my pamphlet entitled *Essential Dietary Supplements*, either on my web site or at my office.

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 internet articles are available that 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 burns calories and fat. Borderline diabetics frequently use medications to lower blood sugar. Exercise alone can often do a better job. Exercise has three major components. **(1) Aerobic exercise helps burn excess fat.** Aerobic exercises include walking, hiking, jogging, bicycle riding, using a treadmill, elliptical machine and other machines. They raise heart and breathing rates and, with training, these activities can be performed for extended periods of time. Aerobic exercises help improve heart and lung function and strengthen supporting bones. **(2) Stretching** is also helpful. Consider trying 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, reducing the likelihood of falls and broken bones. **(3) 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 fracture risk.

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 to a long healthy life. Our intestines need healthy **fiber** to function properly. We all need to regularly eat rough, raw vegetables like carrots, celery, cabbage, dark green lettuces, broccoli and many others. That **requires strong healthy teeth.** The supplements that help strong bones, calcium, magnesium and vitamin D, are also needed for healthy teeth. 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.** Electric toothbrushes like the Sonicare and Braun help kill bacteria. Regular brushing, flossing, and dental check ups are needed. A needed 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 has high levels of carbohydrate and can increase abdominal weight gain. Ideally, alcohol consumption should be limited to no more than one half drink per day.

Drinking Water: We all need to get enough water. Soft drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks and juices may contain lots of sugar, sometimes salt and frequently caffeine, artificial sweeteners and other unneeded or harmful chemicals. We need **just plain water!** There is lots of controversy about plastic water bottles, and I don't see that issue being settled any time soon. For now, **just keep drinking water throughout the day.**

No one is expecting you to change everything at once. You are not an automobile. There are no replacement parts. We need to heal the parts you have. With patience and self-care, if you want, we can help you gradually reduce those habits that are harmful and encourage needed life style changes. **You should feel some improvement right away.** We will help by supplementing hormones, vitamins and minerals. We can talk about diet, exercise, sleep habits and recreation. We can even talk about sex. All of us age and none of us is going to be immortal.

Our goal is to help you maintain your health and vigor, so you can enjoy a fulfilling, interesting, active and worthwhile old age.