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Top Men's Health Concerns and How Acupuncture Can Help

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine have been used to treat men's health concerns for thousands of years and are growing in popularity. The reason for this growth in popularity is that many health issues that men face, such as high blood pressure, prostate problems and depression, respond extremely well to acupuncture treatments.

Primary health issues that affect men include:

Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease is the leading men's health threat, with heart disease and stroke topping the list of the first and second leading causes of death worldwide. By integrating acupuncture and Oriental medicine into a heart healthy lifestyle, you can dramatically reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Taking even small steps to improve your health can reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease by as much as 80 percent. Steps to prevention include managing high blood pressure, quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, reducing stress and getting better sleep. All of these issues can be helped with acupuncture and Oriental medicine

Acupuncture has been found to be particularly helpful in lowering blood pressure. By applying acupuncture needles at specific sites along the wrist, inside the forearm or in the leg, researchers have been able to stimulate the release of natural opioids in the body, which decreases the heart's activity and reduces its need for excess oxygen. This, in turn, lowers blood pressure.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in men. Tobacco smoke causes 90 percent of all lung cancer, so you should make every effort to quit smoking for improved health and longevity. If you are ready to quit smoking, acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help.

Shown to be an effective treatment for smoking and other addictions, acupuncture and Oriental medicine treatments for these issues focus on jitters, cravings, irritability, and restlessness; symptoms that people commonly complain about when they try to quit. Treatments also aid in relaxation and detoxification.



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Foods Men Should Eat Every Day



Adding nutrient-rich super foods to the diet can give men a healthy boost.

Here are just a few foods that can help maintain muscle mass, prevent prostate cancer, and more.

Avocados

Avocados are a good source of vitamin K, dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, folate and copper. Rich in potassium, avocados contain more of this nutrient than bananas. Potassium is needed to regulate nerves, heartbeat and, especially, blood pressure. An added bonus for men: Avocados inhibit the growth of prostate cancer cells.

In one study on substance addiction, a team from Yale University successfully used auricular (ear) acupuncture to treat cocaine addiction. Results showed that 55 percent of participants tested free of cocaine during the last week of treatment, compared to 24 percent and 9 percent in the two control groups. Those who completed acupuncture treatment also had longer periods of sustained abstinence compared to participants in the control groups.

Depression and Mental Health

Men are four times more likely to commit suicide than women, reports the Men's Health Network, which attributes part of the problem to under-diagnosed depression in men. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 6 million men have depression each year in America alone. It is now believed that the male tendency to hide feelings of depression and to not seek professional help has skewed previously reported numbers. Depression in men does not present solely as extreme sadness. Depression in men may present as anger, aggression, burnout, risk-taking behavior, mid-life crisis or alcohol and substance abuse.

When people are suffering from depression, brain chemicals and stress hormones are out of balance. Sleep, appetite, and energy levels are all disturbed. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can alleviate symptoms associated with depression and mental health issues by helping to rebalance the body's internal systems.

The growing body of research supporting the positive effects of acupuncture on depression, anxiety, and insomnia is so strong that the military now uses acupuncture to treat troops with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and combat stress syndrome.

Prostate Health

The prostate is prone to enlargement and inflammation as men age, affecting about half of men in their sixties and up to 90 percent of men as they approach their seventies and eighties. If left untreated, benign prostate gland enlargement, which presents with symptoms such as frequent nighttime urination, painful or difficult urination, can lead to more serious conditions such as prostate cancer, urinary tract infections, bladder or kidney damage, bladder stones, and incontinence.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be used to treat prostate problems by relieving related urinary symptoms and preventing the more serious conditions from occurring. The few studies completed on acupuncture and prostatitis show positive results, with participants noticing a marked improvement in their quality of life, a decrease in urinary difficulties, and an increase in urinary function.

Reproductive Health

While reproductive health concerns may not be life threatening, they can still signal significant health problems. Two-thirds of men older than seventy and up to 39 percent of men around the age of forty report having problems with their reproductive health.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are well known for improving male performance; in fact, there have been medical textbooks devoted to the subject. Chinese Emperors took their performance quite seriously and would consult with a team of physicians if they experienced any difficulties in the bedroom.

Blackberries

Blackberries are packed with Vitamin C, calcium and magnesium, with more than double the amounts than their popular cousin, the blueberry. Vitamin C is a powerful stress reducer that can lower blood pressure and return cortisol levels to normal faster when taken during periods of stress. Magnesium and calcium act together to help regulate the nerves and muscle tone.

Too little magnesium in your diet can cause nerve cells to become over activated and can trigger muscular tension, soreness, spasms, cramps, and fatigue. Blackberries also score high on the oxygen radical absorbance capacity (ORAC) scale assesses the antioxidant content of food: the higher the score, the better the food's ability to neutralize cell-damaging free radicals that lead to cancer.

Spinach

Spinach is one of the most nutrient-dense foods in existence. Spinach can help protect against prostate cancer, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, lower blood pressure and strengthen muscles.

Walnuts

When it comes to their health benefits, walnuts are the king of nuts. Richer in heart-healthy omega-3s than salmon, loaded with more anti-oxidants than red wine, and packing half as much muscle-building protein as chicken, walnuts are one of the all time super foods.

Acupuncture can be used for a variety of reproductive health concerns including low sperm count, diminished sperm motility, diminished libido and male menopause (also known as male climacteric or andropause).

Call now to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can improve your health and well being!

Yogurt

Eating yogurt that contains live bacterial cultures every day improves digestive health, boosts the immune system, provides protection against cancer and may help you live longer. Not all yogurts are probiotic though, so make sure the label says "live and active cultures."

Vitamin D and Your Health

Vitamin D supplementation has been in the news a lot in recent years. Should I take Vitamin D supplements or not? So far, I haven't seen or heard a single shred of evidence that speaks against supplementation, except for the remote possibility of vitamin D toxicity, since D is a fat-soluble vitamin that gets stored up over time. But, vitamin D toxicity is rare. Even the conservative Institute of Medicine has concluded that taking up to 10,000 IUs daily for up to 6 months poses no risk for adverse effects.

While studies continue to refine optimal blood levels and recommended dietary amounts, the fact remains that a large part of the population is deficient in this essential nutrient. If the findings of existing clinical trials hold up in future research, the potential consequences of this deficiency are likely to go far beyond bone health.

Every tissue in the body, including the heart, brain, muscles, and immune system, has Vitamin D receptors. Which means that vitamin D is needed at proper levels for all these tissues to function well. Studies indicate that the effects of a vitamin D deficiency include a higher risk of cancer (especially colon, breast, and prostate), high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoarthritis, diabetes, and many immune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis and MS.

Most people do not get enough sun exposure, especially here in not-so-sunny Pittsburgh, and as a result don't produce enough vitamin D. Pre-vitamin D forms in sun-exposed skin, and 10-15% of the pre-vitamin D is immediately converted to vitamin D, the form found in supplements. Vitamin D is changed to 25-hydroxyvitamin D, the main circulating form found in the blood. Then the kidneys convert 25-hydroxyvitamin D into its biologically active form, 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D, also known as vitamin D hormone.

Our vitamin D levels are measured in the blood as 25-hydroxyvitamin D, which is considered the best indicator of having enough (or not enough) of vitamin D. Some recent studies indicate that maximum bone density is attained when blood levels of the vitamin reach 40 nanograms per milliliter of blood.

The main dietary sources of vitamin D are wild-harvested oily fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel, and bluefish, as well as cod liver oil, beef liver, eggs, and cheese. Most experts agree that it's tough to get enough vitamin D from food alone, although many foods have been fortified with it.

Dr. Michael Holick of Boston University, a leading expert on vitamin D and author of *The Vitamin D Solution*, said in a recent interview "we want everyone to be above 30 nanograms per millimeter, but currently in the US, Caucasians average 18-22 nanograms and African-Americans average 13-15 nanograms".

Such low levels could account for the higher incidence of several chronic diseases in this country, according to Dr. Holick. For example, he said, in the Northeast, where sun exposure is reduced, cancer rates are higher than in the South. Also, rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, and prostate cancer are higher among dark-skinned Americans than among whites.

The current recommendation for vitamin D supplementation, established by the Institute of Medicine, is 200 IU a day from birth to age 50 (including pregnant women); 400 IU for adults aged 50-70; and 600 IU per day for those older than 70. Many experts believe these recommended dosages are too low.

For a more accurate guide to appropriate doses, go to the website www.grassrootshealth.com. The website founder, Carole Baggerly, herself a breast cancer survivor, has devoted her website to educating people about the role vitamin D plays in maintaining health and preventing disease. The website contains a bonanza of information about vitamin D, including the recommendation that you take a daily dose of vitamin K-2 with your vitamin D supplement. Testing your blood levels of vitamin D is a necessary starting place to determine how much you need.

To your continued good health!

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