

# Low Libido and Male Menopause

## Signs & Symptoms and What You Can Do



BY MILA McMANUS M.D.

**H**as your “Johnson” fallen and can’t get up? Lower sex drive, mood swings, weight gain, decline in mental sharpness, fatigue, loss of muscle mass and erectile dysfunction are common symptoms of andropause. Andropause is the male equivalent to a female’s menopause and is noticeable in men older than 50, but can be diagnosed in patients as early as in their 20s.

While hormonal decline is an age-related process, the underlying causes in men with such symptoms can include dietary factors, certain vitamin deficiencies and other lifestyle habits like alcohol and chronic stress. Chronic stress can lead to adrenal insufficiency, which in turn affects testosterone production. Alcohol acts like estrogen in the body and estrogen blocks testosterone function. Excessive alcohol intake can also cause erectile dysfunction.

But before popping the top on a vial of Viagra,

which only improves performance but does not increase libido, there are four areas men can assess to increase their sex drive and performance.

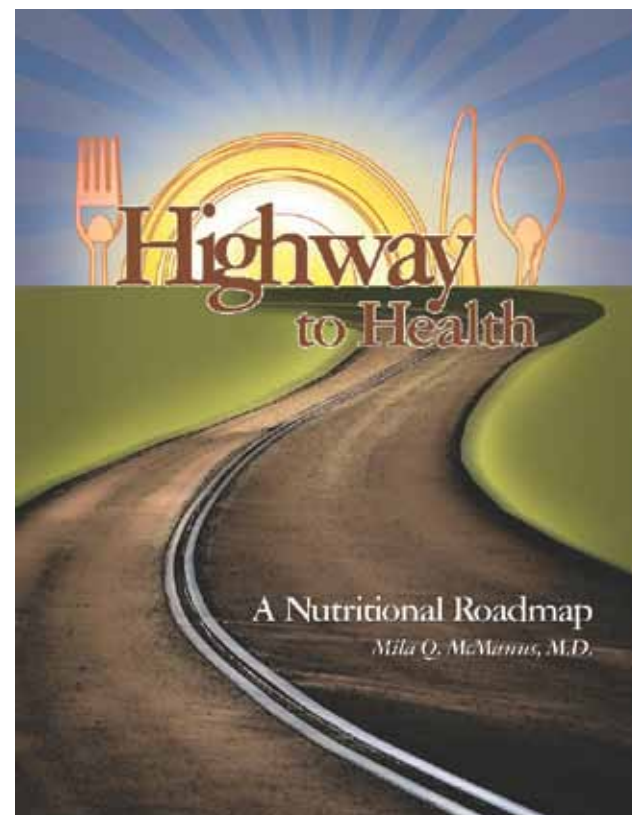
**DIET:** Cleaning up the diet can have a dramatic effect on hormone balance. For instance, soy is ubiquitous in the diet. Processed meats are often combined with soy because it’s so much less expensive than meat and manufacturers do a great job of making soy taste just like meat. If one looks at ingredient labels on anything in a box or wrapper, they will see soy listed about 95 percent of the time. One of the problems with soy is how estrogenic it is in the body, and estrogen blocks testosterone function. This is true for women as well; however, the effect is more dramatic in men.

**EXERCISE:** Estrogen is stored in fat cells and this adds to the ‘estrogen burden’ in the body. Losing weight will also, of course, improve one’s body image and they are more likely to feel amorous when they feel slim and sexy.

**ZINC:** Supplement with zinc (25-50mg a day), especially if one tends to sweat a lot. People lose zinc in their sweat, and zinc naturally helps to prevent testosterone from metabolizing into other hormones in the body.

**HORMONE REPLACEMENT:** Yes, men may need hormone replacement with andropause just as a woman does with menopause. Though synthetic hormones can increase risk of cancer and blood clots, for example, bio-identical hormones are a different story and can provide hormonal balance and optimization.

Overall in assessing andropause and the associated symptoms of low libido, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, mood swings, weight gain, decline in mental sharpness, and loss of muscle



mass, find a physician who is willing to invest time in you and your lifestyle. The bigger picture evaluation may reveal simple nutritional deficiencies, food allergies, dietary habits, toxins in the body, overgrowth of yeast in the GI tract and hormonal imbalances that influence andropause and those associated symptoms.

Simplistically speaking, when the engine light comes on in your car do you want a mechanic to simply turn off the light or fix the cause of the problem? Before going the route of performance enhancing drugs take the time to improve in the areas of diet, exercise, zinc intake and bio-identical hormones so that you can live a healthy and potent life.

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