

Natural Libido Enhancer

Pills aren't the only answer. If decreased sexual desire is the problem, "find something that adds spice."

"Find something interesting that stimulates your mind, since the brain is the largest sex organ."

Libido-boosting suggestions:

Sleep in the bedroom. Have sex anywhere else - the den, kitchen, or laundry room.

Seize the moment wherever, whenever, it hits.

Buy something new. New lingerie definitely qualifies.

Send hot sizzling notes to each other during the day.

Buy a sex toy. Read an erotic novel together. Watch an erotic video.

There are so many things, you can never run out of ideas. What helps most - the best aphrodisiac - is going on a field trip to an adult store together. Try different things, touch, giggle, have a good time. You find you can't wait to get home to try them.

Maca: Maca is a vegetable native to Peru that is traditionally used as an aphrodisiac. There have been rat studies, but studies to support its use are very limited. But because it's a vegetable, maca won't hurt you.

Pycnogenol: Pycnogenol is an extract of the bark from French maritime pine. It is believed that pycnogenol helps protect blood vessels and boost production of nitric oxide - similar to L-arginine, yohimbe, ginkgo, and ginseng.

Some studies show that taking L-arginine and pycnogenol together boosts nitric oxide production. Those weren't randomized trials (meaning the combination wasn't compared to placebo), but there was an effect.

So there might be some effect in combining the two.

ArginMax: If female patients are interested in herbs, ArginMax is a combination of Panax ginseng, L-arginine, ginkgo biloba, damiana, multivitamins and minerals.

Two large clinical studies found that ArginMax improved sexual function in menopausal and other women with low sexual desire.

Zestra for Women: Zestra, a blend of botanical oils and extracts, is designed to increase female sexual desire, arousal, pleasure, and satisfaction when applied to the female genitalia. Zestra's ingredients include borage seed oil, evening primrose oil, angelica extract, coleus extract, vitamin C, and vitamin E.

In a preliminary study, Zestra was shown to increase sexual sensation, arousal, pleasure, and satisfaction in "normal women" and women with arousal problems. Zestra also helped with sexual side effects related to antidepressants.

In a study funded by Zestra Laboratories, 217 women were randomized to either Zestra or a placebo oil. In some aspects, such as sexual desire and arousal, the Zestra group fared better. In other aspects of the study, there was no difference between Zestra and placebo. The only side effect mentioned was mild to moderate genital burning in more women in the Zestra group.

Chasteberry (Vitex): Chasteberry is native to the Mediterranean region and western Asia - and is approved in Germany for premenstrual and menstrual problems. It is said to increase sexual desire by boosting the hormone progesterone and the brain chemical dopamine.

Chasteberry also decreases the brain chemical prolactin that interferes with sexual desire.

L-Arginine (Arginine): Arginine is an amino acid the body needs for many functions, like boosting immunity. The body also uses arginine to produce nitric oxide - an effect similar to the way Viagra works. Arginine has been found to improve blood flow to the clitoris.

High doses, around 5 grams daily, might be necessary for L-arginine to work.

Arginine is generally safe, although there may be drug interactions - especially with high blood pressure drugs.

Ginkgo: Ginkgo has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years. Ginkgo leaf extract is used today to boost mental power, help Alzheimer's, and treat tinnitus, asthma, fatigue, and sexual dysfunction. Some studies show that ginkgo enhances the effects of nitric oxide - which allows better blood flow to the clitoris.

Ginkgo is one of those herbs that are pretty popular. The thing is there's no great data for sexual function on it. Ginkgo is thought to help with sexual dysfunction related to antidepressant use. One study showed that ginkgo made no difference; the other showed some slight difference. There may be a large placebo effect, but there have been anecdotal reports that it helps some people.

If these suggestions fail to "light a spark," discuss with Dr. Jamieson at your appointment about some prescription alternatives for libido.