BPH affects 50% of Men over Age 50
Due to age-related hormone changes, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a gradual non-malignant enlargement of the prostate gland, is a common problem that affects 50% of men over age 50, increasing to 75% in men over age 70. 

Although it is not cancerous, an enlarged prostate can cause problems. If the gland becomes too large, it obstructs the urethral canal, interfering with urination and the ability to empty the bladder completely. When the bladder can not empty completely, the kidneys may also not empty and dangerous pressure may build in the kidneys. In severe cases, the kidneys may be damaged both by pressure and by toxic substances in the urine. Urinary tract infections in men are associated with enlarged prostate.

Symptoms associated with BPH include:
- Progressive urinary frequency
- Urgency and discomfort
- Excessive urination during the night
- Decreased urinary stream and force
- Sensation of incomplete emptying
- Dribbling after urination

Saw Palmetto Extract Inhibits Dihydrotestosterone...
The Hormone Responsible for Prostate Enlargement

Enlargement of the prostate gland is caused primarily by an age-related increase in dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a metabolite of testosterone produced under the influence of the enzyme testosterone 5-alpha-reductase. This potent male hormone causes overproduction (hyperplasia) of prostate cells which results in prostate enlargement. High levels of DHT are also associated with male pattern baldness.

A liposterolic extract of saw palmetto berries (Serenoa repens), has demonstrated the ability to inhibit testosterone 5-alpha-reductase, thereby reducing production of DHT and the symptoms associated with BPH.

This natural plant extract has been found to inhibit DHT in three ways:
- By blocking the formation of DHT through inhibition of testosterone 5-alpha-reductase
- By inhibiting the binding of DHT to the cell receptors in the prostate
- By blocking the uptake of DHT into the cell nucleus

Listed below are some of the double blind studies which show the effectiveness of saw palmetto extract. Dosage used in these studies was between 80 and 320 mg. per day.

### Improvement in Prostate Function Using Saw Palmetto Extract

<table>
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(over)
Saw palmetto is a small scrubby palm tree native to the West Indies and the Atlantic coast of North America from South Carolina to Florida. Its berries have been used for centuries for treating prostate conditions, as well as a sexual rejuvenator and aphrodisiac. Saw palmetto berries contain an oil with a variety of fatty acids and phytosterols. These fatty acids include capric, caprylic, caproic, lauric, palmitic and oleic acid and their ethyl esters. The major phytosterols are beta-sitosterol, stigmasterol, cycloartenol, cycloartenol, lupeol, lupenone and 24-methyl-cycloartenol.(5)

Supplements of essential fatty acids have also been beneficial to BPH patients. The effects appear to be due to the correction of an underlying deficiency since these patients’ prostatic and seminal lipid levels and ratios are often abnormal.(2)

Olive oil is used in Progressive Labs’ Serenoa Repens softgels. Olive oil contains 70 to 85% unsaturated oleic and 9 to 14% linoleic acid.(4)

### Faster, More Effective without Side Effects

**Saw Palmetto: Past, Present, Future**

While today saw palmetto is primarily recommended for relief of symptoms associated with BPH, native Americans used saw palmetto berries as a remedy for atrophy of the testes, impotence, inflammation and low libido in men. The berries are also recommended for infertility, painful periods and to promote lactation in women, as well as a tonic and expectorant for mucous membranes, particularly bronchial passages.(5)

**Male pattern baldness** is also associated with increased DHT. Low dose finasteride (Propecia®), one of the newest hair loss remedies, has been effective for many people. Since saw palmetto inhibits DHT in a similar manner, the herb may also prove to be beneficial in preventing hair loss.(5)

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#### REFERENCES