



THE DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION FOR

healthy living

Practical Insights into the World of Natural Healing

Milled Flaxseed

If you're a health conscious person, you're probably already consuming oatmeal or other whole grain cereals as part of a nutritious breakfast. You can easily top your cereal with three tablespoons of ground flaxseed, enjoying both the nutty taste and the knowledge that you're doing something good for your body. You can also mix ground flaxseed with yogurt or salads, or add a heaping tablespoon or two to your favorite smoothie.

Flaxseed Improves Markers of Prostate Health

In a study from Duke University Medical Center, Dr. Wendy Demark-Wahnefried and co-investigators studied the ability of flax to support the cellular health of the prostate gland among 25 men. The men were told to consume a low-fat diet, supplemented with three tablespoons of ground flaxseed per day. They simply sprinkled it onto their cereal or other favorite food.

Reporting in the journal *Urology*, the researchers observed that after only 34 days of supplementation with ground flaxseed, the men experienced a positive effect on both their cholesterol and testosterone levels. Their levels of prostate specific antigen (PSA) also fell. No loss of libido was reported.

Low-fat, High-Fiber = Prostate Health

Similar observations on the power of flaxseed to support the prostate have been made in Europe at the Oncology Centre, Antwerp, Belgium. Writing in 1999 in the journal *European Urology*, researchers noted

that Asian men are more likely to enjoy excellent prostate health than their Western counterparts. Similarly, vegetarian men are also more likely to have healthy prostates than omnivorous males. Both Asian and vegetarian males consume low-fat, high-fiber diets which provide a rich supply of phytoestrogens (weak dietary estrogens from plants), including lignans. The researchers propose these plant constituents are helpful in promoting prostate health.

The Promise of Plant Lignans

Many foods of plant origin, of course, contain varying amounts of these compounds and hundreds of plants, we now know, manifest some degree of estrogenic activity.

For example, soy, a dietary staple in many parts of Asia, is a major source of the phytoestrogens daidzein and genistein.

Flavonoids are present in high concentration in many fruits, vegetables and other botanicals. Apples, onions and tea-leaves are excellent sources of flavonoids.



metabolism and bioavailability, and also inhibit enzymes, such as tyrosine kinase and topoisomerase, which are crucial to cellular proliferation.”

The Doctor's Prescription

Although researchers caution that more studies are necessary, the use of dietary flaxseed as a means of supporting the well-being of the prostate appears promising. There are no adverse health effects associated with ground flaxseed when used in the serving size of three tablespoons daily, the same amount used in the most recent study. Plus, flaxseed has so many benefits that go beyond prostate health. For example, the viscous nature of soluble fibers such as flaxseed mucilage is believed to slow down digestion and absorption of starch, helping maintain healthy levels of blood glucose and insulin, and supporting other endocrine responses.

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Plant lignans occur naturally in many cereals, grains, fruits, and vegetables, and are converted to the mammalian lignans, enterodiol and enterolactone; however, the richest source of plant lignans is flaxseed.

The authors of the *European Urology* study cited above noted that, “In addition to their estrogenic activity, many of these plant compounds can interfere with steroid

How to Select a Quality Milled Flaxseed Product

When you purchase milled flaxseed, be sure the product label specifies that the ground flax is from cold-milled, select flaxseed and that it is 100 percent organic and therefore pesticide and herbicide-free. Such a milling process delicately liberates the naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, amino acids, lignans, and phyto-nutrients without damaging the fragile Omega 3 fatty acids. Compared to whole flaxseed, the milled variety has a greatly increased surface area of soluble and insoluble fibers for maximum benefit.

Just two to four tablespoons of ground flaxseed daily is all it takes to support the health of your prostate.

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