

# Terry Talks Nutrition



## Chinese Herbal Secrets for Sexual Health and Vitality

First, let's talk about what can go wrong, and then I want to share with you a traditional Chinese formula that yields excellent results for both men and women.

There can be a reluctance to pursue help when sexual health is impaired. Some people are too embarrassed to discuss it. However, if you are coughing, you'd realize something is amiss in your lungs and you would seek to find out why and improve your lung health. If your sex life is not all you wish it could be, it is a sign that something is amiss as well, and there are steps you can take to improve your sexual health.

### A Program to Restore Sexual Health

If you think that stress is playing a role, please also see my newsletter article entitled "*Reduce Tension and Relieve Anxiety Naturally*," archived on the Terry Talks Nutrition website. Stress can interfere greatly with sexual health.

Next, you need to consider your overall health. If your problems came on suddenly, you may want to visit your healthcare practitioner to determine if there is an underlying illness that is impairing your healthy sexual function, or if this could be a side effect of a medication you just started taking. If you get tired easily, or out of breath after climbing a flight of stairs, you need to increase your daily level of exercise. Good muscle and heart function are very important to sexual health, and even a brisk half-hour walk each day can make a big difference.

After addressing stress and overall health, it may be time to consider adding medicinal herbs that target certain aspects of sexual health.

### Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Improves Sexual Function

Although many in the West know little about Traditional Chinese Medicine, its practice goes back over 3,000 years. The use of herbs, food, physical exercise, meditation, massage, and acupuncture are all utilized by physicians to restore balanced qi (pronounced "chee"). Qi is believed to regulate a person's physical and emotional balance,

and to be influenced by the opposing forces of yin (negative energy) and yang (positive energy). Ill health is the result of an imbalanced yin and yang.

In TCM, a long active life is built upon two foundations: food and a regulated, healthy sex life. Because the kidneys are believed to be closely related to reproduction, growth and aging, when the kidneys are weak, both men and women may experience infertility, while men may have a shortage of semen and women may experience problems with menstrual cycles.

TCM classifies herbs as having one of four natures - cold, hot, warm and cool - based on the body's response to taking them, and whether the disease they are being used to treat is considered "warm" or "cold." There are also some herbs that are considered "neutral," but although their action may be mild, they will still tend to be warm or cool. Practitioners of TCM believe that by prescribing herbal tonics to increase vital hormone production and tone (warm) the kidneys, they are also increasing vitality, strengthening resistance, and promoting longevity. Herbal tonics are considered the "great balancers" to restore vital energies. An aphrodisiac effect may also be noticed!

A traditional formula for promoting sexual activity combines the herbs lyceum, desert broomrape, cnidium, barrenwort, schisandra, ophiopogon and astragalus.

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## Key Words


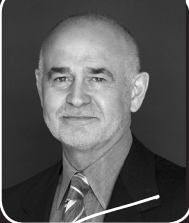
sexual health, erectile dysfunction, ED, TCM, Traditional Chinese Medicine, libido, lyceum, Lycium barbarum, desert broomrape, Cistanche deserticola, cnidium, Cnidium monnieri, barrenwort, Epimedium brevicornum, schisandra, Schisandra chinensis, ophiopogon, Ophiopogon japonicas, astragalus, Astragalus membranaceus, hyposexuality

**Sex.** Is there any topic about which we are more divided? Sex can be forbidden, desired, feared, casual, intimate, avoided, shameful, healthy, unhealthy, irresistible, joyous, life-affirming, and let's not forget: the start of all human life. The many cultural ideas and individual belief systems surrounding sex can make it a difficult topic to discuss. But we must not forget that it is at least partly a physical act involving biological systems that can be impacted by a variety of health challenges.

### Is Sex Important?

We know that sex is important for reproduction. And we know that for many, sexual acts are pleasurable and a way to build greater levels of intimacy. But did you know that a healthy sex life confers many other healthy benefits? In a very interesting study, Queen's University in Belfast documented some of the ways in which a healthy sex life impacted other aspects of life. What they found may amaze you. A healthy sex life increased sense of smell (via increase in hormone production), reduced cardiovascular risk (cutting heart disease and stroke rates by nearly 50%), improved fitness (after all, it is an exercise), reduced depression, improved prostate health in men, improved dental health, and improved bladder function (in women).

Unfortunately, many things can interfere with a healthy and pleasurable sex life.

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### Modern Science Meets TCM

Traditional herbs are greatly respected in China, and formulas are often studied using more modern methods in an effort to further validate and understand their actions. In a clinical trial in China, 240 men and women who experienced weak sexual function were divided into two groups. Half the participants received the traditional

formula of lycium, desert broomrape, cnidium, barrenwort, schisandra, ophiopogon and astragalus (500 mg, 3 times daily), and the rest of the participants took a control formula. After one month, men in the treatment group experienced a 15% increase in testosterone levels. Estrogen levels in the female participants did not change. In total, 88% of the participants reported an increase in sexual satisfaction at the end of the 30 day study. The modern clinical study validated the traditional use of these medicinal herbs—measurable improvements in only 30 days of use.

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The following chart describes the benefits of each of these herbs for sexual function.

Herb	Nature	Benefits
Lycium ( <i>Lycium barbarum</i> )	Neutral	In Traditional Chinese Medicine, Lycium (Gou Qi Zi) is used for invigorating sex and replenishing the vital essence. It nourishes semen and is a tonic for the kidneys.
Desert Broomrape ( <i>Cistanche deserticola</i> )	Warm	Shown in laboratory research to increase energy and stamina; traditionally used to treat impotency and infertility. The herb is shaped like an erect penis.
Cnidium ( <i>Cnidium monnieri</i> )	Warm	Used in Traditional Chinese Medicine to treat impotence and female reproductive issues due to its sexual stimulating effects* <sup>5-7</sup>
Barrenwort ( <i>Epimedium brevicornum</i> )	Warm	Laboratory testing has found that barrenwort helps support erectile function through its effects on the corpus cavernosum and can stimulate sperm production; in traditional medicine, this herb is believed to have a sexually stimulating effect in males.
Schisandra ( <i>Schisandra chinensis</i> )	Warm	Traditional Chinese Medicine classifies Schisandra as an astringent – something used to promote fluid balance. It is recommended to aid in healthy sperm formation, and is a vital adaptogen, increasing strength and stamina.
Ophiopogon ( <i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> )	Slightly cold	A yin (yin represents cool and the substance of the body, including blood and bodily fluids) supporter in Traditional Chinese Medicine, mar dong ( <i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> ) has also been found to promote circulation.
Astragalus ( <i>Astragalus membranaceus</i> )	Slightly warm	In laboratory studies, astragalus was able to stimulate sperm motility. It is used as an energy tonic and to treat energy deficiency.

### Sexual Health is Important

In conclusion, there are healthy, natural ways to help improve your sexual health and increase your level of satisfaction. Don't expect immediate results—products that cause functional changes in an hour or two are not improving health—they are merely causing stress on an unhealthy system. To repair and restore healthy functioning takes a little time—a few weeks, or even a month or two. However, using a validated TCM formula can make real and substantial changes in your life—and maybe in the life of someone you love, as well!

**Terry recommends a formula with these ingredients. Look for it at your local health food store:**

Proprietary Complex 1,500 mg  
Lycium (*Lycium barbarum*) Fruit Extract,  
Desert Broomrape (*Cistanche deserticola*)  
Whole Herb Extract, Cnidium (*Cnidium monnieri*) Fruit Extract, Barrenwort (*Epimedium brevicornum*) Whole Herb Extract, Schisandra (*Schisandra chinensis*) Berry Extract, Ophiopogon (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) Root Extract, Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*) Root Extract

When in doubt, always consult your physician or health care practitioner. This column is to provide you with information to maintain your health.