The Man In the Mirror

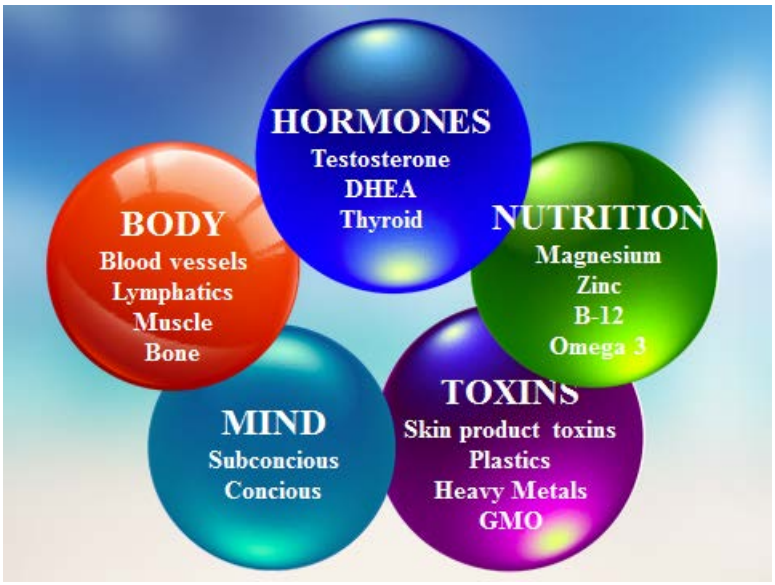
by Sangeeta Pati MD FACOG

Is it aging? Is it hormones? Why is my sex drive changing? My sexual function is too. I've noticed my muscle mass has declined. I've got a belly I never had! My mood is lower than it used to be. I'm more anxious than I used to be. I'm tired and I have no stamina. Is this normal aging? Is it hormone decline? Can I do something about this?

As we approach the age of 50 years, all hormone production naturally declines by about 50%. This decline occurs much faster and earlier if we have nutrient deficiencies and more stress. Although, hormone deficiencies result in a host of symptoms, these deficiencies also lead to degeneration of organs. This occurs because hormones are responsible for maintaining bone, brain, heart, nervous system, cardiovascular system, joints and skin. The hormones that decline include testosterone, thyroid, cortisol, DHEA, and growth hormone. The symptoms and diseases that eventually follow can include:

Symptoms	**Diseases**
Low energy/ stamina	Heart disease/ heart attacks/ strokes
Low sex drive and function	Obesity
Decreased muscle mass	Memory Impairment/ Dementia
Increased fat mass	Osteoporosis
Anxiety	High cholesterol
Depression	Diabetes
Low confidence/ motivation	Skin aging
Joint and muscle aches	Arthritis

What can you do?
Obviously, one option is to accept this natural decline. Another possibility is to explore ***all*** your options to optimize your quality of life and choose the combination that suits you best. The best way to optimize your health is to use a **5-point restorative** approach:



1) *Measure and optimize hormones:*
   In men, a ***testosterone*** level of 250 to 1100 is considered "normal".
   - Studies show that prostate cancer is associated with low testosterone levels.
   - Studies show that men feel their best with testosterone levels above 700.
   - Studies also show that men with testosterone levels above 564 have a 41% lower rate of heart attacks and strokes

   Thyroid hormone is needed to activate testosterone. You may be in the "normal" range and yet can assume that if you are over the age of 40, your thyroid function is declining and will reach about 50% function by the age of 50.
2) *Measure and optimize your nutrition*
   Nutrient deficiencies are a major underlying cause of symptoms and disease, because they cause genetic damage. The most common deficiencies are magnesium, zinc and B-12 which are all required for optimal activation of testosterone and thyroid.
   - There are excellent ways to measure your exact nutritional status, such as with Spectracell™ or NutraEval™, which are covered by most insurances.
   - 50% of every plate should be vegetables. Try for 8 different colors a day, to maximize phytonutrient variety.
   - If you need supplements, they should be selected carefully for purity and with knowledge of your individual nutrient status.
3) Reduce exposure to ***toxins*** such as skin and body products with preservatives, house cleaners, plastics that wrap our food and water, GMO foods and cell phone towers. Enhance elimination through bowel, liver and gallbladder support. Use skin brushing to enhance lymphatic clearing of toxins.

4) ***Balance the mind.*** SIMPLIFY your life to give energy to those things that are most meaningful. A simple start would be to try 12 weeks of minimal commitments.
5) ***Balance the body.*** Practice conscious breathing three times daily and restorative yoga poses. Integrate exercise into your activities of daily living (i.e. lift, mop, sweep, wax, dig, walk, climb). Focus on breathe, balance and flexibility. Keeping your heart rate in the aerobic range of less than 120 beats per minute allows your body the best oxygenation.

When you optimize the hormones and nutrients that protect your brain, bone and heart, when you clear toxins and balance the mind and body; you can most certainly achieve *intelligent health and beauty from the inside and outside for that man in the mirror.*

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