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A Urologist's Guide to Ingredients Found in Top-Selling Nutraceuticals for Men's Sexual Health

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Ingredient	Dosage Range	Claimed Mechanism	Comments
Red Ginseng (Panax Ginseng or Korean Ginseng)	10 to 150 mg	Increases production of nitric oxide (NO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most common ingredient among top-selling products• Seems to be well-tolerated• “Not enough quality evidence of efficacy to recommend it as first-line therapy for ED”
Tribulis terrestris	100 to 1000 mg	Increases testosterone production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports of severe toxicity• Benefits not supported by research• “Patients should be cautioned” about this ingredient.
Zinc	1 to 30 mg	Reverses effects of hypogonadism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unclear whether increased testosterone due to zinc repletion results in improved sexual performance or libido• No evidence that zinc supplementation raises testosterone levels in healthy people, but it might.
Magnesium	11 to 90 mg	Not given	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low magnesium has not been directly linked to any sexual disorders.• No studies have associated magnesium supplementation with improved sexual function.
Selenium	50 to 70 mcg	Not given	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No studies show that selenium supplementation improves sexual health.

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Horny goat weed	50 to 600 mg	Contains icariin, a flavonol glycoside that has been shown to have PDE5I effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal studies have shown improved erectile function in rodents, but no human trials have been conducted. • "Recommendations for patient use should likely be withheld."
Vitamin B6	2 to 10 mg	Combined with vitamins B9 and B12, regulates homocysteine levels. High levels of homocysteine have been associated with decreased NO production and erectile problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of diabetic patients found that taking vitamin B6 along with PDE5I improved erections more than PDE5I alone.
Vitamin B12	4 – 50 mcg	Regulates metabolism and DNA synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B12 deficiencies can lead to fatigue and depression. • Correcting deficiencies may improve sexual function by improving psychological aspects like mood, arousal, libido, and energy.
Vitamin B9 - Folate	400 – 600 mcg	Homocysteine and iron metabolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficiency can result in low energy and hyperhomocysteinemia.
Vitamin B3 – Niacin	3 – 50 mg	Often used to treat hyperlipidemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cause significant vasodilation and flushing. • Literature regarding sexual function is limited.
Vitamin B1 - Thiamine	1.5 mg – 2 mg	Plays key role in energy metabolism. Deficiency can lead to neurogenic impotence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In deficient populations (such as alcoholics), thiamine replacement may improve sexual function.

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Fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum)	600 – 1,100 mg	Thought to assist hormonal regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one trial has evaluated fenugreek’s effects on male sexual health. Men who were given fenugreek saw improvements in sexual arousal and orgasm and quality of life related to muscle strength, energy, and well-being. No adverse events were noted. • Further human trials seem “worthwhile” to evaluate safety and efficacy before recommending fenugreek to treat male sexual dysfunction.
L-Arginine	118 mg – 3 g	Increases NO production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might be helpful for patients with endothelial dysfunction or those with poor NO production. • Insufficient evidence to support widespread use for men with ED.
Maca	100 – 2,000 mg	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence is largely anecdotal. Little scientific evidence on humans, so routine use is not supported for male sexual health.
Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)	25 – 50 mg	Mildly androgenic steroid. DHEA is converted to testosterone and estrogen in peripheral tissues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies have had mixed results. Data on efficacy is lacking. DHEA supplementation does not seem to affect overall hormonal levels but “should be considered with caution.”
Ginko biloba	25 – 120 mg	Induction of NO in endothelial cells and relaxation of vascular smooth muscle cells. Thought to help with circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent studies have found no benefit. • “No convincing clinical data to support its routine use in men with ED.”
Yohimbine	50 – 63 mg	Raises penile nerve stimulation resulting in increased NO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One of the more promising natural products for treatment of ED.” • Still, there are no direct comparisons of yohimbine to pharmaceutical treatments, so should not be considered first-line treatment.