

## NUTRITION

## Want to improve your sex life? Eat this, not that

By JENNIFER NELSON  
Mother Nature Network  
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Planning a romantic evening? You might think a juicy steak, a good bottle of wine and some chocolate will set the stage. But you'd be wrong.

Saturated fats from meats, alcohol and chocolate are the exact things you'll want to avoid for good sex. Each is filled with chemicals and stimulants that have the opposite effect on libido and performance.

"If the body is spending its time and energy cleaning itself constantly from these chemicals we put in it, it cannot begin to perform at its peak sexually," says Brian Clement, Ph.D., L.N.C., the co-director of the Hippocrates Health Institute in West Palm Beach, Fla., and co-author with his wife of "7 Keys to Lifelong Sexual Vitality."

"One-third of young marrieds have fertility problems today and instead of seeing men with performance problems at age 70, the way we did a few decades ago, we now see it at age 40," says Clement. "Fifty percent of 40-year-old men cannot perform."

"Almost everyone we see here at the institute asks about their sexual health," says Anna Maria Clement, Ph.D., L.N.C., part of the husband-wife duo and co-director at Hippocrates, a leading institute in natural and complementary healthcare.

The Clements attribute heavy metals, air pollution, food toxins, pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and soda consumption for contaminating and weakening the cell systems in the body leading to sexual libido and performance issues in both men



Avocado and grape tomato salad is a recipe that fits any occasion, especially if you are looking to be romantic. MCLATCHY TRIBUNE

and women.

Worse, many times Viagra is being used as a recreational drug. The No. 1 user group is now men between 20 to 28 years old. But Dr. Brian Clement warns that the drug over-stimulates the libido, leaving men who abuse it unable to perform by the time they are in their 30s or 40s.

What can you do to improve your sexual health naturally? Throw out old myths about aphrodisiacs, as we've been accustomed to thinking of them. Named for Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of sex and beauty, these include an array of foods like oysters, because they "resembled" reproductive organs, and chocolate, the fatty ac-

ids of which negatively affect organs like the liver and gallbladder. Also skip:

- Bacon, sausage and other fatty meats, which contain high levels of saturated fats and cholesterol, which clog the penal and vaginal arteries since they are so small and quickly collect plaque. Once plaque forms, you can have difficulty achieving and maintaining arousal and orgasm.

- Dairy. Saturated fats in most cheeses are comparable to those found in fatty meats. Your worst lunch option? A bacon cheeseburger and chocolate milkshake.

- Processed baked goods. Even when the products say "No Trans Fats," chances are they're present. Ingredients

may exclude trans fats, but because of the way baked goods are processed, trans fats are often created during baking.

- Soy-based products are high in estrogen, which can lower male sex drive and increase the risk of disease and testosterone in women.

### The better sex diet

To really get your blood moving, circulation-enhancing foods are key. Food that's high in omega-3 fatty acids like mackerel, salmon and wild salmon are tops. Improved circulation results in greater erectile response, helpful for improving sexual function in men — and in women, too, since blood

flows to the clitoris and surrounding vulva.

What you should reach for:

- Carrots, a well-known libido enhancer, loaded with vitamin E

- Green leafy veggies, which clean blood and open capillaries effectively

- Avocados are fuel for cells with their essential fatty acids

- Watermelon contains phytochemicals to open blood cells

The new focus is on all natural, healthy, good-for-sex foods. Ingredients like mustard greens, spinach, baby kale and pea shoots work well. Ditto for pumpkin seeds, figs, nutmeg, black raspberries, Jerusalem arti-

chokes and yams.

Foods that promote weight loss also hold libido-boosting potential. Since obesity is a risk factor for erectile dysfunction, reducing weight can increase testosterone and enhance performance.

- Bottom-line: Foods that are good for your heart are also good for your sex organs. The same foods that clog arteries and bring on heart attacks (think greasy burger and fries) are generally going to cramp your love life over time and should only be eaten occasionally since they prevent blood flow from reaching the genitals, affecting performance — and pleasure.

So go ahead, have the sex salad!