

Sexual Healing

The antidepressants Prozac, Zoloft, and Paxil can work wonders to lift spirits, but they also take the joy out of sex for some 12 to 60 percent of the people who take them. Now results of a pilot study by psychiatrist Alan Jay Cohen at the University of California at San Francisco suggest that ginkgo biloba, an ancient Chinese herbal medicine, may be an antidote. Cohen prescribed two 60-milligram capsules, to be taken four times daily, of a patent-protected formulation of ginkgo-tree leaf extracts to 37 men and women, all of whom experienced diminished libido and delayed orgasm as a result of antidepressants. (The subjects had tried switching to other antidepressants, taking sexually activating prescription drugs before bedtime, or avoiding medication on weekends, all to no avail.) After taking the capsules, 86 percent reported substantial improvement in their sexual function, with virtually no side effects. Cohen says that ginkgo biloba seems to restore blood flow to the genitalia, which is often blocked by serotonin-enhancing drugs.