If you’re one for keeping up with the latest health and wellness news, then chances are maca (not to be confused with the popular green tea powder “matcha”) has made its way across your radar.

**What is Maca?**

While maca may be recognized as the “Peruvian ginseng” thanks to a handful of characteristics that it shares with the ginseng root, it’s actually a member of the radish family (which happens to be a subcategory of the mustard (aka Brassicaceae) family). Grown in central Peru on the high plateaus of the Andes Mountains, Peruvians have a 3,000-year history of cultivating maca root and utilizing it in both foods and medicines.

**What is maca used for?**

Relying on the historical uses as a starting point, the more recent studies concerning maca have focused their efforts on exploring a number of maca’s purported abilities to influence a number of hormone-related conditions.

**Maca for Increased Libido**

Numerous double-blind studies have been done on both men and women, all of which ultimately suggesting that maca may improve libido.

According to one study on a group of 57 males ages 18-64, supplementation of 1.5-3g maca over a period of 12 weeks resulted in a notable increase in libido.

Similarly, a different double-blind study addressing sexual dysfunction and lack of libido in relation to anti-depressants, both a 1.5g and 3g dose of maca were appeared to increase
test subjects' libido. It was also noted that the 3g dose appeared to be more effective than the 1.5g dose — resulting in a greater increase in libido.

**Maca for Erectile Dysfunction**

While it may not be surprising given the evidence pointing to maca’s ability to enhance libido, studies have also suggested that maca may help men with erectile dysfunction. In a randomized double-blind study involving 50 male participants, one group was given 2400mg of maca extract and the other group a placebo. While there was an increase in erectile function in both groups, the increase in the maca group proved to be significantly larger than that of the placebo group.

**Maca for Symptoms of Menopause**

There’s a significant amount of evidence supporting maca’s ability to help both sexes with hormonal disorders and imbalances (be they naturally occurring or linked to some other factor). In a study that was testing for the effects of maca in relation to the psychological and sexual symptoms of menopause and in relation to the roles of estrogentic and androgenic activity. According to their findings, a daily 3.5g dose of maca helped to reduce the psychological symptoms of menopause (including anxiety and depression) while also lowering levels of sexual dysfunction. Their results also demonstrated that maca afforded these results independent of estrogen and androgen.

**Maca as a Dietary Supplement**

Bypassing the ways that maca can be prepared as a food, a standard daily dose of maca for a dietary supplement can be anywhere from 1,500-3,000mg. While the supplement can be created by turning the root into a powder, the more popular method at the moment is by creating either an ethyl acetate or water-based extract. From there the supplements are usually taken alongside food.

**The Takeaway**

We’re excited to see what’s in store for maca over the next several months. Be sure to join us as we continue to cover the progress of maca and the other hot industry ingredients of today and tomorrow! •