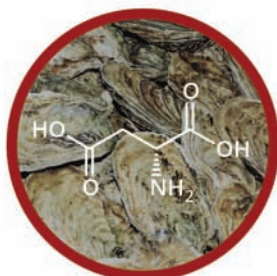


PeriodicGraphics

With Compound Interest

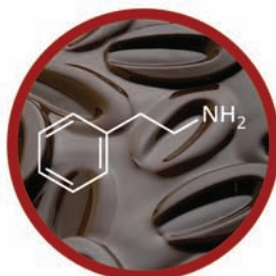
APHRODISIAC CHEMISTRY

A range of foods have been touted as aphrodisiacs over the years. Just in time for Valentine's Day, we take a brief look at some of the substances and compounds that supposedly exert a feel-good effect and the evidence behind them.



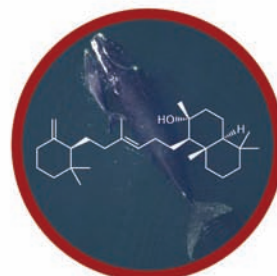
Oysters - D-Aspartic acid

A study linked high levels of D-aspartic acid and *N*-methyl-D-aspartate—both present in mollusks—to an aphrodisiac effect. But there's no conclusive evidence that they trigger desire in humans.



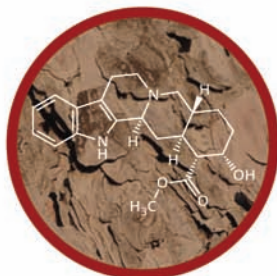
Chocolate - Phenylethylamine

Phenylethylamine is cited as causing a romantic high. But because it's quickly broken down when ingested, little of the compound reaches the brain. As a result, it's unlikely that this effect is genuine.



Ambergris - Ambrein

Once sought for making perfumes, ambergris comes from sperm whales' intestines. When injected with ambrein, a constituent of ambergris, rats show increased sexual behavior. No data are available on its effect in humans.



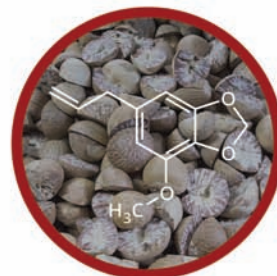
Yohimbe Bark - Yohimbine

Yohimbine capsules have some efficacy in treating erectile dysfunction. Human and animal studies have shown increased sexual desire after weeks of treatment.



Spanish Fly - Cantharidin

Cantharidin can cause a sustained erection, but there is no evidence for it increasing sexual desire. It's also highly toxic, deadly to humans at low doses, and illegal to sell as a supplement in many countries.



Nutmeg - Myristicin

Myristicin is known to have psychoactive effects. Limited animal studies have shown nutmeg might have a small influence on sexual behavior, but large doses cause unpleasant side effects.



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