

MUSHROOM AS A SUPERFOOD AND ITS NUTRITIONAL IMPORTANCE

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Introduction

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines superfoods as "foods rich in compounds (antioxidants, fiber, fatty acids, etc.) known to have beneficial effects on human health." The label explains why it's a "healthy" bar to throw in after a workout. Your gym bag doesn't seem very useful. Mushrooms are not only delicious. Rich in vitamins, it also has nutritional value as it promotes a healthy immune system and enhances bone health. For this reason, they are considered superfoods (Figure 1) for those seeking weight loss benefits: mushrooms contain no cholesterol or gluten either. Here are some of its scientifically proven benefits: Mushrooms are widely known for their great taste and amazing health benefits. Packed with a ton of essential vitamins and minerals, they make for an excellent addition to your diet, adding flavor to many different recipes. Crimini mushrooms are one of the most widely used mushroom varieties, popular in kitchens around the world. Many don't realize that mushrooms, including crimini mushrooms, are actually a kind of fungus. They're native to North America and Europe and are known for their delicate flavor and meaty texture.

Health Benefits: Mushrooms have transitioned from being merely food items to nutrient powerhouses, earning the distinguished title of "superfood." These popular mushrooms are available in a broad range of hues, forms, and flavours, but they also pack a surprising nutritional punch. Because of their many health advantages, including as support for the immune system, enhanced cognitive function, and assistance with weight management, mushrooms have become a staple in the diets of health-conscious people all over the world. This page provides comprehensive nutritional information on mushrooms as well as details on how consuming them can considerably enhance overall health. Salutations from the world of mushrooms, a superfood and nutrient powerhouse.



Fig.1: Different variety of mushroom

Immune System Support

Mushroom Including mushrooms in your diet can enhance your general health and wellbeing by naturally fending off common illnesses. Shiitake, Maitake, and Reishi mushrooms are widely known for their ability to bolster the immune system. Mushrooms are rich in Vitamin D. A deficiency of the vitamin can cause a slowdown of your metabolism. They contain various bioactive compounds, such as beta-glucans, which promote the growth of white blood cells crucial for fighting infections and disease. Additionally, mushrooms provide antioxidants that combat free radicals and reduce inflammation, supporting a stronger immune system. By incorporating mushrooms into your diet, you can benefit from their immune-boosting properties and improve your overall health.

Brain Health and Cognitive Function

Mushroom consumption on a regular basis may enhance cognitive function and brain health. It is thought that several species, including cordyceps and lion's mane, promote the manufacture of nerve growth factor (NGF), which supports the development and upkeep of brain cells. The effects of NGF on memory, focus, and general cognitive function have been encouraging. Niacin and riboflavin, two B-vitamins that enhance neurological function, are abundant in mushrooms. Consequently, include mushrooms in one's diet may aid in preventing age-related cognitive decline and improving brain function. Lion's mane mushrooms are particularly noteworthy as they contain a unique compound called helicene, which has neuro-regenerative properties and may help prevent or alleviate symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's. Additionally, lion's mane mushrooms provide essential amino acid tryptophan for proper brain function and serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood, appetite, sleep, and overall well-being (Fig.2).



Fig.2: Lions mane mushroom

Weight Management and Metabolic Health

Due to their low calorie, fat-free, and high fibre content, mushrooms are a fantastic addition to a weight loss-focused diet. Foods high in fibre encourage satiety and help curb hunger, which supports healthy weight management. Additionally, mushrooms are the only known source of a unique type of dietary fibre known as beta-glucans. These beta-glucans help to keep blood sugar and cholesterol levels in a normal range. Furthermore, because they contain beta-glucan, mushrooms help support a balanced metabolic profile. Specific tumours can be inhibited from growing by these fibre compounds by preventing blood flow and cell division.

Nutrient-Rich and Versatile

Mushrooms have a staggering array of vital minerals and are low in salt and cholesterol. They act as natural sources of many vitamins, including vitamin D, vitamin B2 (riboflavin), and vitamin B3 (niacin), as well as other minerals, including potassium, selenium, and copper. Because they are high in protein and offer a complete amino acid profile, mushrooms are a fantastic choice of plant-based protein for vegetarians and vegans. Due to their umami flavour and range of textures, mushrooms are also quite adaptable in the kitchen. For a variety of culinary preparations, it can be grilled, sautéed, added to salads, soups, stews, stir-fries, or eaten raw in salads. Additionally, mushrooms are a valuable source of vitamin A, also known as beta-carotene, which acts as an antioxidant and reduces the risk of certain types of cancer and vision problems such as macular degeneration. Vitamin A plays an important role in promoting eye health, supporting immune function, and maintaining healthy skin.

Useful Source of Fiber

A healthy diet includes fiber, mainly found in mushrooms. Plus, it's low in calories, salt and fat. Pectin, a type of soluble fiber proven to lower cholesterol, is a great source of nutrients they contain. Both the soluble and insoluble fiber found in mushrooms help maintain a healthy digestive tract and prevent constipation. Reducing the risk of diabetes and heart disease are just two of the many health benefits fiber provides. It also helps with weight management by keeping you feeling fuller for longer.



Fig.3: Nutritional benefits of different mushroom

Conclusion

In conclusion, mushrooms have acquired the distinction of "superfood" by transcending their status as merely culinary elements. Due to their rich nutritional profile, varied flavours, and various health advantages, mushrooms have become a mainstay in the diets of health-conscious individuals all over the world. Mushrooms provide a wide range of advantages, including strengthening the immune system, enhancing brain function, assisting with weight control, and supporting general well-being. Mushrooms strengthen immune system function, improve cognitive performance, and contribute to a balanced metabolic profile since they are a rich source of important minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, beta-glucan, and other special substances. Additionally, its kitchen adaptability opens up a world of culinary possibilities. Greetings from the realm of superfood mushrooms. Mushrooms' nutritional value significantly enhances general health and energy.

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