

Nature's 5 Most Powerful Medicinal Mushrooms (And How They Support Your Health)

There are over 50,000 mushroom species in existence. Some are common foods, and others are hallucinogenic or poisonous. But there are also other mushrooms that are highly nutritious and even medicinal. Research into this area is exploding, with findings that now have some doctors recommending certain mushrooms along with their patients' conventional cancer treatments! Below, we explore five of the most researched and beneficial medicinal mushrooms out there.

Medicinal mushrooms have important health benefits and exhibit a broad spectrum of benefits and uses, including:

- anti-allergenic,
- antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal,
- anti-inflammatory,
- antioxidative,
- cytotoxic,
- immunomodulating,
- antidepressive,
- antihyperlipidemic,
- antidiabetic
- pro-digestive,
- hepatoprotective,
- neuroprotective,
- nephroprotective,
- osteoprotective, and
- hypotensive properties.

Medicinal mushrooms are also loaded with some of nature's finest compounds including polysaccharides, proteins, fatty acids, alkaloids, terpenoids, tocopherols, phenolics, antioxidants, flavonoids, lectins, enzymes, and more.

Mushrooms are also incredibly gentle on the planet. They require very little energy and water to grow, and their growing medium is compostable. As well, their growth footprint is tiny. Over a million mushrooms can be produced annually in a one-acre space. They're one of the most sustainably grown foods in the human diet.

As mentioned above, there are countless species of mushrooms out there, and medical mushroom species are no exception. The 5 mentioned below are well-studied and may specifically help with mental clarity, longevity, and immunity.

1. TURKEY TAIL. These are multicolored fungi that can grow on both standing and fallen trees. They grow in several parts of the world, including the United States. Turkey Tail are typically disc-shaped and resemble a turkey's tail, hence the name.

Also known by the names *Trametes versicolor* or *Coriolus versicolor*, these mushrooms have been used for centuries as a health supplement for a wide range of ailments and preventative measures. One of the most prominent and well-known benefits of turkey tail is its immune-boosting properties, along with its ability to help ward off certain chronic diseases. This is largely due to compounds found within turkey tail called polysaccharopeptide (PSP) and polysaccharide-K (PSK), which inhibit the growth of cancer cells. This is why some researchers are now suggesting it may be wise to take turkey tail when undergoing chemotherapy and other conventional cancer treatments to complement these therapies.

PSP also stimulates the immune system, allowing for a more robust immune response to pathogens. PSP can also benefit gut health by feeding and promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria.

Turkey tail's compounds may also help prevent weight gain and obesity.

2. STOUT CAMPHOR FUNGUS. This unique mushroom, also known as *Antrodia camphorata*, has been widely used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat liver problems, food and drug intoxication, abdominal pain, hypertension, and itchy skin.

Like most mushrooms, its benefits are thanks to a rich diversity of bioactive compounds. Stout camphor fungus contains over 78 compounds, many of which have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and detoxifying effects. As such, research has found it to support the immune system, bolster liver health and protect the brain.

3. REISHI Mushrooms deliver a rare collection of bioactive compounds that provide important benefits to our health. One of the most well-known of these benefits is the ability to support the immune system. Reishi mushrooms can boost the number of white blood cells, enhancing their efficiency and increasing their activity which can help the immune system to fight disease-causing cells.

Reishi mushrooms may also have benefits when used in conjunction with other forms of cancer treatment. A meta-analysis conducted by a team of researchers from Australia, Argentina, and China concluded that patients who were given reishi extract in their anticancer regimen were 1.27X more likely to respond to chemotherapy or radiotherapy than those without it.

And other studies have suggested that supplementing with this mushroom could improve symptoms of depression, as well as boost energy levels.

Reishi mushrooms may also promote healthy cholesterol levels and act as a powerful antioxidant.

4. KING TRUMPET mushrooms, often referred to as *Pleurotus eryngii*, are a large form of the popular OYSTER mushroom that is native to Europe and Asia.

All oyster mushrooms boast an impressive nutrient profile, containing high amounts of riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, phosphorus, potassium, and protein.

Oyster mushrooms of all kinds may help to bring down chronic inflammation, reducing the risk of inflammation-related disease and colon cancer. King trumpet mushrooms may also lower the levels of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, thereby helping to protect the heart.

King trumpet has also been shown to protect against the growth of disease-causing cells thanks to the wide range of beneficial compounds it contains.

5. MAITAKE. Although maitake mushrooms grow in many parts of the world, they’ve historically been most popular in Japan and China, where they’ve been used for thousands of years to support health, vitality, and longevity.

Maitake mushrooms are known as adaptogens. This means they could help the body respond to mental and physical stress, regulating bodily systems to help return to and maintain homeostasis.

They could be useful in helping to prevent or even treat cancer. Other studies have found that maitake can also support the health of the heart by lowering cholesterol and stabilizing blood pressure, all while promoting healthier blood sugar levels.

6. BONUS MUSHROOM. Medicinal mushrooms have been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years, and now modern science is finding that a few of them, in particular, could make a real contribution to helping us be healthy, strong, and happy. But never forget the simple BUTTON MUSHROOM. Inexpensive, easily available and very useful in many dishes, this is truly the most valuable mushroom. It is also known as cremini and portabella mushrooms. They are all *Agaricus bisporus*, in fact, just different ages. Button mushrooms, which are white, are the toddlers; cremini mushrooms, which are brown, are the teenagers; and portobellos, which are brown and much larger versions of their younger selves, are the adults.