

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF MEDICINAL MUSHROOMS

By Wellness Manager Gretchen Schempp

Mushrooms really are a superfood. All mushrooms are full of nutrients including a vast range of trace minerals, vitamins and protein with a good balance of amino acids. They're also full of soluble and insoluble fibers. In addition to the nutrition, they are low in fat and carbs alike.

If you're looking for the benefits of medicinal mushrooms, we've got you covered. We carry fungi guru, Paul Stamets' line of mushroom supplements, Host Defense. Along with offering great medicinals, this company's mission to use mushrooms to change the world is inspiring:

Complementary Medicine for Integrative Medicine
Reforestation practices
Habitat restoration of damaged ecosystems
Myco-remediation methods of toxic wastes
Myco-filtration technologies for cleaning water
Myco-agriculture practices for famine relief
Natural remedies to replace toxic pesticides
New biofuels based upon fungi
Host Defense offerings and uses:

CHAGA

Chaga is recently gaining a following for its high antioxidant activity. This is due to its high content of SOD (superoxide dismutase). This is an enzyme with great potency. Singlet oxygen is responsible for oxidizing and damaging tissue, SOD is known to halt the oxidation of this toxic free radical. Chaga is a hard wood-like mushroom found on birch trees. Chaga is called the "Mushroom of Immortality" by the Siberians and is the most nutrient dense of all growths. They have even inoculated sick trees with the Chaga growth to facilitate healing and to strengthen them.

CORDYCEPS

Cordyceps was my "gateway" mushroom and remains one of my favorites. It has long been used by athletes for energy and stamina but also touts many other benefits. For example, healthy libido, supporting kidney and liver function, lung support and oxygen uptake to name a few.

LION'S MANE

I became familiar with Lion's Mane roughly six years ago following a concussion that resulted in dizziness, headaches and memory loss. Lion's Mane supports mental clarity, focus and memory, and provides cerebral and nervous system support. Studies even verify the Nerve Growth Factor in Lion's Mane. This isn't surprising, as Lion's Mane appears like a tendril-ish "nerve" ending mass.

TURKEY TAIL

This small leathery polypore (a group of fungi that form fruiting bodies with pores or tubes on the underside) is abundant in the forest here in the Midwest. They are found year-round but are best harvested during their active growing season - late summer to early fall. Turkey Tail is one of the most researched fungi. Over 300 clinical studies have been conducted on this mushroom. Ongoing studies are happening here in the United States on breast cancer survival rates and the use of turkey tails. Specifically notable is that turkey tail helps cancer patients maintain white blood cell counts during chemotherapy.

REISHI

Reishi may be a more familiar mushroom, as it is the #1 selling supplemental mushroom worldwide. Reishi falls in the category of an adaptogen, an herb that supports the body's ability to adapt to stress. Reishi promotes cardiovascular health, supports energy and stamina and supports overall wellness.

MAITAKE

Maitake is rich in beta glucans, which are known for promoting immune system health. In addition, they are said to enhance a healthy glycemic balance by promoting normal blood sugar metabolism.

Host Defense also has a line of wonderful blends of mushrooms for more specific symptoms and issues. These include:

MYCOMMUNITY

A 17 species multi mushroom complex. This "multi-vitamin" of fungi is a comprehensive immune formula that encourages resistance to cellular assaults.

MYCOSHIELD

This is a five species immune support blend that comes in an easy to use spray application. Perfect for travel or purse or pocket.

STAMET'S 7

A seven species multi including cordyceps, reishi, Lion's Mane, Maitake, Chaga, Mesima and Royal Sun Blazei. This is a great blend for daily support.

The new line is the Myco Botanicals. These blends include situation specific herbs along with mushrooms.

WOMAN

This is a breast support blend including four species of mushrooms with added herbals Shatavari, Broccoli sprouts and Chasteberry.

LIVER

This blend of four mushrooms includes turmeric, milk thistle and black pepper for enhanced absorption. Chaga, Reishi, Milk Thistle and Turmeric support liver detoxification while Mesima promotes healthy liver function.

BRAIN

Lion's Mane, Reishi and Cordyceps blended with well studied herbs, ginkgo, bacopa and gotu kola. This blend is for supporting mental clarity and the nervous system.

In addition to a vast range of supplemental mushrooms, the Co-op also carries dried mushrooms in the Bulk department. You can find Reishi, Woodear and a delicious medley of mushrooms.

For more comprehensive information on mushrooms and how they may be able to transform our world look for incredible videos and informational talks with Paul Stamets on YouTube online.

Note: Portions of this article were formerly printed in the Scoop. It has been updated for this publication.

