

SUN-TANNED MUSHROOMS: THE NATURAL AND UNIQUE WAY TO SUPPORT IMMUNITY

With the Australian winter well and truly set-in, and the pandemic continuing to unfold, now more than ever we need to consider our diets to help support our immune system. Ensuring we have healthy levels of vitamin D is particularly important for our immunity.

Although Australian's spend over \$100M on vitamin D supplements a year, one in four Aussies are considered vitamin D deficient¹. Prolonged vitamin D deficiency attributes to osteoporosis and makes us more susceptible to infections and chronic disease. Those who spend most time in doors (office workers, the elderly or those hospitalised), are the most at risk of vitamin D deficiency. Of course, the combination of winter and lockdowns increases this risk - as less Aussie spend time in the sun to get their daily dose of this essential 'sunshine vitamin.'

Australian Dietitian and mushroom researcher, Glenn Cardwell, says it is a little-known fact that mushrooms can be an excellent source of vitamin D, if they have been pre-exposed to sun-light.

“Mushrooms have been used for medicinal reasons since ancient times, and as **fungi**, not a vegetable, they truly are fascinating. It is a little-known fact that **mushrooms can easily help to combat vitamin D deficiencies, if we ‘tan’ them before we eat them.**”

As Mr Cardwell explains, the process of ‘tanning’ mushrooms, by exposing them to the sun’s ultra-violet light, doesn’t change the texture, colour or flavour of the mushroom, it simply boosts their vitamin D levels.

“Most Australians know that we can get vitamin D from the sun via our skin, however mushrooms can create vitamin D through a similar, natural process. By placing our store-bought mushrooms in the midday sun for around 15-minutes², they naturally multiply in vitamin D. Just three medium-sized (100g), sun-tanned mushrooms can provide 100 per cent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin D.”

“Tanning our mushrooms is a simple and natural way, to boost our vitamin D consumption from our diet. So we should all get in the habit of popping our mushrooms out in the sun as soon as we get them home from the grocery store.” Mr Cardwell added.

The great news is these new 'super charged' levels of vitamin D will remain in the mushroom for around a week if stored in the fridge², with little loss throughout the cooking process³.

“Vitamin D can also be found in milk, egg-yolks and oily fish, but you need to eat a lot of them to consume adequate levels. Sun-exposed mushrooms provide an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver this vital nutrient. And, as mushrooms are the only non-animal source of vitamin D, they are a great way for vegetarians and vegans to look after their health.” said Mr Cardwell.

Vitamin D is just one of the many nutrient's mushrooms deliver, Mushrooms have a unique combination of nutrients which are different to those found in common vegetables One serve of mushrooms (100g) also provides at least 20 per cent of the recommended daily intake of four B vitamins, which help to keep the body's cells functioning properly, important at keeping us healthy. Studies⁴⁵⁶ have shown that mushrooms are rich in nutrients and antioxidants which help support a healthy immune system and promote overall health.

Studies⁷⁸⁹ have also shown that eating mushrooms regularly, around two to three times a week is associated with a lower risk of developing cancer, specifically breast and prostate cancer.

Mr. Cardwell said mushrooms flavour and versatility make them the perfect all-rounder.

“All fresh white mushrooms, swiss browns and portobello mushrooms sold in supermarkets around the country are Australian grown and of the highest quality. The science is clear, it’s good to add the mighty mushie to your regular winter dishes, because they taste great and are healthy for you!”

GLENN’S TOP TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY THIS WINTER:

To try and stay healthy this winter and give your immune system a fighting chance, follow these top tips from dietitian and mushroom expert, Glenn Cardwell.

- Stay active, even though the weather is getting colder it’s still good to get outside and stay active during winter. If your local farmers’ market is open, pop out and support them, oh, and buy some mushrooms as well
- Eat well, especially a diet high in vitamin-rich fruits, vegetables and mushrooms to ensure you’re getting all your essential nutrients. as part of your daily diet. This will help to keep you healthy and support a strong immune system. A serve (100g) of mushrooms is a really easy way to boost your daily intake of D and B vitamins
- Put your fresh mushrooms out in the midday sunshine for about 15-minutes before putting in the fridge. This will naturally multiply their levels of vitamin D and antioxidants
- Get enough sleep, being well rested and getting enough sleep will help you to stay healthy. Studies have shown lack of sleep can make us susceptible to sickness

AUSTRALIAN MUSHROOM RECIPES

- **Swiss Brown Mushroom, Leek & Pea Risotto** <https://bit.ly/2UnLCrL>
- **Roasted Mushroom and Cauliflower Soup** <https://bit.ly/3zi5M55>
- **Blended Beef and Mushroom Chilli Con Carne** <https://bit.ly/3zos3yl>
- **Vegetarian Mushroom “Meatless balls”** <https://bit.ly/3roYAI0>
- **Mushroom and Zoodle Salad** <https://bit.ly/3xTOWmv>

ABOUT AUSTRALIAN GROWERS MUSHROOM ASSOCIATION:

The Australian Mushroom Growers Association (AMGA) is the not-for-profit peak industry body, representing the best interests of the Australian mushroom industry. We are passionate about promoting mushrooms for their myriad of unique health benefits and their delicious taste.

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