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WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF GRIFOLA FRONDOSA?

Jul 1, 2012 | By [Sirah Dubois](#)

Grifola frondosa is a species of mushroom usually referred to as maitake in Japan, where it's indigenous. The mushroom is one of many recognized medicinal mushrooms in Japan and China, but a majority of Western scientists and doctors believe its health benefits are largely folklore. However, scientific investigation during the last decade in Asia has shown that maitake mushrooms contain many nutrients beneficial for health. More research is needed before specific recommendation can be made, although medicinal mushrooms such as Grifola frondosa show promise in combating several serious diseases. Consult a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine about the potential benefits and side effects of consuming maitake mushrooms.

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GRIFOA FRONDOSA

Grifola frondosa has been used in Japan and other Asia countries as a food source and medicine for a few thousand years. It was commonly referred to as the dancing mushroom in earlier times because people danced for joy when they found some in the wild -- the mushrooms were known to be strongly medicinal, so they were quite valuable. Maitake mushrooms are still valuable in Japan, China and Korea, but are relatively much less expensive due to modern farming and production. Maitake mushrooms are available in a variety of forms throughout Asia, including dried, powdered and extract. In North America, they are commonly eaten raw or steamed.

POTENTIAL CANCER BENEFITS

Maitake mushrooms, as well as many other mushroom and yeast species, are rich in polysaccharides known as beta-glucans. Certain beta-glucans are used to help relieve the negative effects of chemotherapy and stimulate the functions of specialized cells of immunity. Japanese research on maitake D-fraction, which is a liquid supplement rich in beta-glucans, has revealed it promotes the growth of cancer-fighting cells and helps reverse and prevent tumor growth, especially in patients with lung, liver and breast cancers. However, more human research is needed before maitake mushrooms are considered a variable cancer treatment in the United States.

POTENTIAL DIABETES BENEFITS

Maitake mushrooms also show great promise for improving or reversing the symptoms of diabetes, according to various Japanese studies conducted at Kyoto University throughout the 1990s. Researchers noted that diets high in maitake mushrooms or powdered maitake supplements can significantly affect insulin release and help balance blood glucose levels. However, patients taking insulin medication are not recommended to combine it with maitake mushrooms because hypoglycemia and other complications can result. Always confer with your doctor about your dietary choices if you have diabetes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Maitake mushrooms are non-toxic and safe to include in non-diabetic diets. Their ability to thwart cancer is not fully understood, so they should not be relied upon as a treatment. Including them in your diet concurrently with conventional cancer treatment seems to help with the side effects of chemotherapy, although you should consult your oncologist and ask about potential contraindications. To gain maximum health benefit, consume maitake mushrooms raw, lightly steamed or rehydrated.

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