

# Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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## “Mushrooms May Lower Cancer Risk”

According to a new Penn State study, published in March 2021 in *Advances in Nutrition*, higher mushroom consumption is associated with a lower risk of cancer. According to the findings, individuals who ate 18 grams of mushrooms daily had a 45% lower risk of cancer compared to those who did not eat mushrooms. In 2018, an estimated 18.1 million new cases cancer were diagnosed globally, and 9.6 million died from the disease. One in 5 men and 1 in 6 women worldwide will develop cancer during their lifetime, and 1 in 8 men and 1 in 11 women will die from cancer. Cancer incidence and mortality are rapidly growing worldwide. Worldwide, the total number of people who are alive within 5 years of a cancer diagnosis (the 5-year prevalence) is estimated to be 43.8 million. Mushrooms are rich in vitamins, nutrients and antioxidants. The team’s findings show that these super foods may also help guard against cancer. Even though shiitake, oyster, maitake and king oyster mushrooms have higher amounts of the amino acid ergothioneine than white button, cremini and portabello mushrooms, the researchers found that people who incorporated any variety of mushrooms into their daily diets had a lower risk of cancer. When specific cancers were examined, the researchers noted the strongest associations for breast cancer as individuals who regularly ate mushrooms had a significantly lower risk of breast cancer. Future studies are needed to better pinpoint the mechanisms involved and specific cancers that may be impacted. Reishi mushroom has antioxidant properties and may enhance immune response. Reishi mushroom contains complex sugars known as beta-glucans. Lab studies suggest that these compounds may help stop the growth and spread of cancer cells. Mushrooms are a rich, low calorie source of fiber, protein, and antioxidants. They may also mitigate the risk of developing serious health conditions, such as Alzheimer's, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. They're also great sources of selenium and potassium. Mushrooms don't just taste nice. They also pack a nutritional punch as they are loaded with vitamins, promote a healthy immune system and boost your bone health. That's why they are considered as a superfood. And for those looking for weight loss benefits, mushrooms contain no cholesterol or gluten either. Although mushrooms are classified as vegetables, technically they are not plants, but part of the kingdom called fungi. Other foods that may reduce the risk of cancer include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, and kale. Frequently eating these foods is associated with a lower cancer risk. Studies show cruciferous vegetables protect against head and neck cancers.

In the America that I love, the next time you make a salad, you might want to consider adding mushrooms to it.

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