

THE MAGIC OF MEDICINAL MUSHROOMS



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destroy tumours, bacteria and viruses the way antibiotics and chemotherapy do: it boosts our own immune system and helps it do its work the way it is supposed to. Shiitake is able to boost virtually the whole host of immune components.

Lentinin and LEM (Lentinus Edodes Mycelium extract) have both shown strong antitumour activity when used both orally and as an injection. When lentinin is added to chemotherapy, cancer patients live longer than when they get chemotherapy alone. This life extending ability of shiitake mushroom has been shown for stomach, pancreatic, colorectal and breast cancers.

In addition to being antitumour, shiitake is antibacterial, antiviral and immune enhancing; good for cholesterol, blood pressure and for moderating blood sugar; and is also a kidney and liver tonic as well as effectively reducing stress and acting as a sexual enhancer. Research has also proven shiitake to be effective against candida and herpes I.

Research suggests that LEM may be more effective than the AIDS drug AZT. Laboratory research also suggests that lentinin can make AZT work better (*Advances in Applied Microbiology* 1993). When lentinin was combined with the AIDS drug Didanosine, it made the drug work better, leading to greater improvement in immunity than the drug alone (*J Med* 1995). In another study, I.V. lentinin was beneficial for AIDS (*J Med* 1998). And 30% of people with HIV had their immunity improve within 8 weeks when they were given lentinin (Abrams, *et al* 1990).

Shiitake is also important for chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS or CFS). When people suffering from CFS were given lentinin, their levels of natural killer cells returned to normal--a boost of more than 300%--and their fatigue and energy levels improved (*Nat Immun Cell Growth Reg* 1987).

When shiitake is added to laser surgery for treating genital warts, it works way better than surgery alone (*CJIM* 1999), and it may also be useful for hepatitis B (*Alt Comp Ther* 1998). Shiitake mushroom also significantly lowers cholesterol levels, lowers blood pressure and may prevent blood clots. Shiitake is also a kidney tonic that can help treat incontinence. It is good for cold and flu and can be used by anyone for immune support.

Reishi: Plant of Immortality

Reishi has been used for over 4,000 years in both China and Japan. It was used especially in the treatment of hepatitis, nephritis, high blood pressure, arthritis, insomnia, bronchitis, asthma and ulcers. Reishi was also used for weight loss, longevity, heart problems and degenerative diseases like cancer.

Today, it is still used for many of these uses but has found a special place in immune system problems.

This mushroom is rich in nutrients.

Research has proven many of reishi's traditional uses. A number of reishi's polysaccharides have demonstrated antitumour and immune stimulating activities, proving that reishi deserves its place helping with HIV, treating and preventing cancer and other immune system diseases.

The sterols in reishi act as hormone precursors, and the adenosine, another of reishi's active ingredients, has been found to inhibit platelet aggregation, making it useful for anyone who suffers from heart disease. Reishi fights heart disease in many ways, including lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, preventing blood clots, dilating the arteries and improving blood flow to the heart. It is good for arrhythmias and has been shown to be helpful for people with heart attacks or angina (*J Tradit Chin Med* 1982). In one interesting study, people with high blood pressure who did not respond to ACE-inhibitors had either reishi or a placebo added to the drug. Blood pressure fell significantly in the reishi group compared to the placebo group.

Another set of compounds in reishi, the triterpenes, have adaptogenic and antiallergy effects. And still other compounds of reishi have both antiallergy and antitumour properties. Reishi seems to have the ability to stop allergy reactions before they start by stopping the release of histamine. Reishi has also been shown to be a pain killer, an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant--making it a good treatment for arthritis--and it possess antiviral properties, is a heart tonic, expectorant, detoxifier, and liver protector.



Reishi Mushroom photo by Ted Snider

It even helps to reduce the side effects of caffeine and improves adrenal function.

Numerous studies have demonstrated reishi's benefits. In 1970, over 2,000 patients with bronchitis were given reishi. In only 2 weeks, 60-90% of the patients were better or improved.

A clinical report from China shows that when reishi was given to 70,000 patients with hepatitis, 90% of them were cured.

This mysterious mushroom also has profound psychological effects.

It has the remarkable ability to calm the nerves while revitalizing them at the same time. It is good for insomnia, stress, anxiety and nervous conditions. Reishi has been used for the symptom cluster of fatigue, irritability, headache, dizziness, sleep disturbance, muscle ache, anxiety and intolerance of loud noise known as neurasthenia. Reishi is amazing for people with nervousness, anxiety and sleeplessness who have weak adrenals or neurasthenia.

Reishi is a great herb for altitude sickness, helping climbers in one study at heights up to 5,000 metres.

Maitake

Maitake has been found to lower blood sugar levels in diabetics and blood pressure in those with hypertension.

But its most exciting use is cancer. Maitake D- or MD-fraction is especially good at fighting breast, lung and liver cancer (*Alt Med Rev* 2002) as well as prostate cancer (*Mol Urol* 2000). Studies have found tumour regression or significant symptom improvement in 69-73% of people with breast cancer, 63-73% with lung cancer and 47-54% of people with the difficult to treat liver cancer (*Alt Med Rev* 1994; *J Orthomol Med* 1997).

These studies also demonstrated maitake's ability to enhance the effectiveness of chemo while alleviating its devastating side effects.

THE NATURAL PATH



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THE NATURAL PATH

A Canadian Leader in Trusted, Cutting Edge Natural Health Information
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Shiitake Mushroom Photo by ted Snider



Mushrooms are among the top supplements for supporting the immune system and treating disease. They have been used for everything from the common cold to cancer, HIV and tuberculosis. Legend has it that they were so prized in the Orient that one variety was lovingly named "maitake" or "dancing mushroom" for the dance of joy a person did upon finding one. And, once he found one, he jealously guarded the secret location of his treasure, since they were considered to be worth their weight in silver.

These incredible mushrooms can be eaten as a delicious food or made into teas, capsules or tinctures and used to increase health and nutrition. Let's take a closer look at some of these magic miracles.

Shiitake Mushroom

Shiitake mushroom, popular in today's cuisine, has traditionally been used in China and Japan to boost immunity; fight colds, measles, intestinal worms and arthritis; to improve circulation, lower cholesterol, and treat heart disease. Today, it is also used to treat asthma, hepatitis B, ulcers, AIDS and herpes. Lentinin, a component of shiitake, is a top selling cancer drug in Japan.

Shiitake contains very powerful immune boosting substances that make it one of the most exciting remedies for any condition involving lowered immunity and one of the most promising cancer fighters. But shiitake doesn't go in there and aggressively

ALSO INSIDE

- The Surprising Benefits of Probiotics
- Women: Help for Low Libido
- Green Tea Lowers Blood Pressure
- Relief from Hot Flashes & Sweats

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Why Conventional Medicine Should be Alternative & Alternative Should be Conventional



Recently, a major player in the Canadian media has suggested that natural remedies can reach the shelf without sufficient research. Perhaps it's time for them to do their research. Not only is "the quality of trials of . . . herbal medicine . . . on average superior to trials of conventional medicine" (*J Clin Epidemiol* 2007), but natural remedies have beaten their conventional counterparts in head-to-head studies for a long list of conditions.

Cardiovascular Health

- Double-blind research shows hawthorn to be as good or better than the ACE-inhibitor captopril for congestive heart failure (*Munch Med Wschr* 1994).
- Niacin has consistently beaten cholesterol drugs, including lovastatin and gemfibrozil (*Arch Intern Med* 1994;154:1586-95; *Arch Intern Med* 1994;154:73-82; *Arch Intern Med* 2000;160:1177-84).
- Olive leaf extract reduces high blood pressure as well as captopril, but is superior because it reduces cholesterol and triglycerides significantly better than the drug (*Phytomed* 2011).
- Tea made from hibiscus extract is statistically similar to captopril in effectiveness for high blood pressure (*Phytomed* 2004).

Psychological Health

- Valerian has proven as effective as, and safer than, the benzodiazepene oxazepam for insomnia in one study (*Forsch Komplement Klass Naturheilkd* 2000) and more effective in another (*Eur J Med Res* 2002).
- Valerian combined with passionflower and hops is as effective

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Photo by Ted Snider

Lifesaver: Garlic Beats Blood Pressure

A systematic review of 9 controlled studies has found that garlic significantly reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in people with high blood pressure. The researchers say that the results are not only statistically significant, but clinically relevant (*Am J Hypertens* 2015;28:414-23). A previous meta-analysis also showed garlic to lower blood pressure better than a placebo (*BMC Cardiovasc Disord* 2008;8:13).



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for insomnia as the drug zolpidem (*Indian J Pharmacol* 2013).

- St. John's wort has either equalled Prozac (*Arzneim-Forsch Drug Res* 199) or bettered it (*Int Clin Psychopharmacol* 2000; *J Clin Psychopharmacol* 2005) in numerous head-to-head comparisons. It is also either equal to (*Clinical Therapeutics* 2000) or better than (*Canadian Family Physician* 2002; *Pharmacopsychiatry* 2005) Zoloft. It is better than Paxil (*BMJ on line edition* 2005) and as good as Celexa (*Pharmacopsychiatry* 2006). Add to that that St. John's wort is safer than all of them.

According to a meta-analysis of 17 double-blind studies conducted by the highly respected Chocrane group, St. John's wort is equally effective as, and safer than, drugs (*Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2008). A second meta-analysis of 13 double-blind studies comparing St. John's wort to SSRI's, the leading class of antidepressant drug, concluded that it is as good but safer (*Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry* 2009).

- 5-HTP worked better, faster and in more people than an SSRI in a head-to-head challenge (*Psycho-pathology* 1991).
- Curcumin is at least as effective as Prozac for depression (*Phytother Res* 2013).
- Saffron is as effective, but safer, than imipramine for major depression (*BMC Complement Alternat Med* 2004) and at least as good as Prozac (*Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry* 2007; *Phytother Res* 2014).

- For anxiety, double-blind research shows passionflower to be better than the benzodiazepine oxazepam because it is as effective but safer (*J Clin Pharm Ther* 2001).

Alzheimer's Disease

- *Ginkgo biloba* is better than and safer than the cholinesterase inhibitor tacrine (*Psychopharmacol Bull* 1998), as good as and safer than donepezil (*Phytomed* 2000; *Euro J Neurol* 2006; *Aging Mental Health* 2009), and better than piracetam (*PLoS One* 2013).
- Vitamin E protects against Alzheimer's better than the drugs selegiline (*NEJM* 1997) and memantine (*JAMA* 2014).

Menopause

- Black cohosh is more effective than

hormone replacement therapy for menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and sweating (*Gynecol* 1982; *Med Welt* 1985; *Therapeuticum* 1987). Black cohosh is also better than estrogen at fighting osteoporosis (*Maturitas* 2003). Perhaps most importantly, unlike estrogen, the herb does not cause breast cancer (*Menopause* 2007) but actually inhibits it (*Arch Gynecol Obstet* 1993; *Phytomed* e-pub 2007).

Fibroids

In menopausal women, black cohosh is more effective than the drug tibolone for shrinking fibroids (*Evid Based Complement Alternat Med* 2014).

Enlarged Prostate

- For benign prostatic hyperplasia, saw palmetto berry is not only safer than Finasteride, it is as or more effective (*Phytomed* 1991; *Prostate* 1996). Saw palmetto berry proved to be as good as the alpha-blocker Flomax while being way safer in two study (*Eur Urol* 2002; *Vojnosanif Pregl* 2013) and more effective than it in another (*Int Urol Nephrol* 2007).

- Saw palmetto combined with nettle root is as effective and safer than Flomax and Finasteride (*Urologe* 1997; *Br J Urol* 2000; *Arzneim Forsch* 2006).

Osteoarthritis

- Glucosamine sulphate is superior to conventional medicine for osteoarthritis (*Curr Med Res Opin* 1982; *Osteoarthritis Cartilage* 1994;2:61-9; *Osteoarthritis Cartilage* 1994;2(suppl1):56; *Arzneim-Forsch* 1998).

- Curcumin has proven more effective than ibuprofen in double-blind research (*Arthritis Rheum* 2001; *Clin Interv Aging* 2014).
- Devil's claw has also proven to be more effective and safer than drugs for osteoarthritis (*Phytomed* 2000).

Diabetes

- Berberine is as good as the diabetes drugs metformin and rosiglitazone with the advantage that it also lowers cholesterol and triglycerides (*Metabolism* 2008; *Metabolism* 2010).

Colitis

- Andrographis has proven to be more effective for colitis than mesalazine in double-blind research (*Aliment Pharmacol Ther* 2011).

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

- Enteric-coated peppermint oil and caraway oil has been proven in double-blind research to be superior to the drug cisapride (*Arzneim-Forsch Drug Res* 1999).

Colic

- Peppermint oil is as effective as simethicone for treating colic (*Evid Based Complement Alternat Med* 2012).

Hay Fever

- Butterbur works as well as antihistamines without causing drowsiness (*BMJ* 2000; *Phytother* 2005).

Bronchitis

- Ivy leaf has been shown in a double-blind study to be as effective as ambroxyl for bronchitis (*Zeits Allergereimmed* 1993).

Sore Throat

- An echinacea/sage throat spray works as well as chlorhexidine and lidocaine sprays for sore throat, according to a double-blind study (*Eur J Med Res* 2009).

Ear Infection

- Ear drops made of garlic, mullein, calendula and St. John's wort in olive oil is as good as an anesthetic eardrop in children with ear infections (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2001). A similar ear drop with the addition of lavender and vitamin E worked even better than eardrops alone or eardrops with antibiotics (*Pediatrics* 2003).

Flu Vaccine

- For people with respiratory infections, echinacea alone or with the flu vaccine works better than flu vaccine alone (*Altern Med Rev* 2012;17:36-41).

Ulcers

- Head-to-head research has repeatedly shown licorice to be as or more effective than ulcer medications like cimetidine, ranitidine and antacids (*Practitioner* 1975; *Practitioner* 1979; *Gut* 1982; *Lancet* 1982; *Irish Med Journ* 1985).

Migraine

- 5-HTP is as effective and safer than the most effective migraine drug (*Eur Neurol* 1986).

Psoriasis

- Double-blind research has concluded that aloe vera is more effective than the drug triamcinolone acetonide for psoriasis (*J Eur Acad Dermatol Veneriol* 2010).

Nausea

- Several double-blind studies have proven ginger to be safer and as or more effective than Dramamine for motion sickness (*J Travel Med* 1994; *Euro Phytother* 1999).

Research Reveals Surprising Variety of Benefits for Probiotic

It is well-known that probiotics benefit digestion and help fight candida. But a large amount of research has also found some surprising benefits for a *bifidobacterium longum* strain known as BB536.

Digestion, Diarrhoea & Constipation

BB536 improves "intestinal environment" by significantly improving the form and other characteristics of bowel movements, significantly increasing the frequency of bowel movements and reducing levels of ammonia and other putrefactive substances (*Bifidobacteria & Microflora* 1991;10:123-30; *Bioscience Microflora* 1997;16:53-8; *Bioscience Microflora* 1997;16:73-7; *Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease* 1999;11:41-6; *J Nutr Food* 1998;1:29-34).

BB536 helps both constipation and diarrhoea. Placebo-controlled research shows that BB536 significantly increases the frequency of bowel movements in people suffering from constipation (*J Nutr Food* 2001;4:1-6; *Japanese Journal of Lactic Acid Bacteria* 2007;18:31-6). It has been shown to significantly help seniors suffering from constipation (*Journal of Japanese Society of Nutrition and Food Science* 1978;31:379-387). And when pregnant women were given BB536 in an open study, gastrointestinal (GI) conditions

improved in 25% of them, flatulence improved in 60% and constipation improved in 74% (*La Sante* 1985;66:805-10).

When healthy people were given the probiotic, the frequency and quality of their bowel movements normalized: they had no constipation or diarrhoea (*Bifidus* 1990;4:21-4). In a double-blind study of elderly people receiving food through a tube, BB536 significantly increased frequency of bowel movements in those with constipation and significantly decreased it in those with diarrhoea (*World J Gastroenterol* 2013;19:2162-70).

Antibiotics are a major cause of diarrhoea and other GI complaints. When people on antibiotics were given a combination of *B. longum* and *L. acidophilus*, they experienced a significant reduction in microorganisms and in GI discomfort (*Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease* 1994;7:17-25). In a placebo-controlled study of people on antibiotics, BB536 reduced the alterations in intestinal microflora caused by the antibiotic and improved fecal weight and frequency as well as abdominal complaints (*Lancet* 1987;2:43).

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

One open study suggests that BB536 can reduce intestinal inflammation in people with colitis. 12 out of 14 people improved, and 10

out of 14 went into remission (*Inflammatory Bowel Disease* 2009;15:1617-18).

A pilot study found that BB536 could significantly decrease the number of a strain of bacteria associated with diarrhoea, inflammatory bowel disease and colorectal cancer (*Anaerobe* 2012;18:14-8).

Immunity & Cancer

When elderly people were given a flu vaccine, those who took BB536 got significantly fewer flues and significantly less fever than those taking a placebo. They also experienced significant improvement in immunity (*Bioscience Biotechnology and Biochemistry* 2010;74:939-45).

Studies have found that BB536 can reduce alteration of intestinal flora and incidence of candida in people on chemo for leukemia (*Bifidobacteria and Microflora* 1984;1:29-33; *Bifidobacteria Microflora* 1988;7:71-4). It can also improve immune activity in children with leukemia.

Hay Fever

Several double-blind studies have proven that BB536 markedly improves eye, nose and other symptoms of hay fever (*J Investig Allergol Clin Immunol* 16, 86-93; *Clin Experiment Allergy* 2006;36:1425-35; *Int Arch Allergy Immunol* 2007;144:123-7; *Int Arch Allergy Immunol* 2007;144:123-7).

NATURAL PATH NEWSFLASH



Has Menopause Lowered Libido? Try Ginkgo!

Many women experience some loss of libido with menopause.

So researchers conducted a triple-blind, placebo-controlled study to see if *Ginkgo biloba* could help.

63 menopausal women were given either 120-240mg of *Ginkgo biloba* extract or a placebo for 4 weeks.

Sexual desire significantly improved in the ginkgo group compared to the placebo group: 64.5% of the ginkgo group reported moderate to great sexual desire compared to only 34.4% of the placebo group.

Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res 2014;19:262-5



Photo by Ted Snider

Green Tea Shown to Lower Blood Pressure

This meta-analysis looked at 13 studies of green tea and blood pressure.

It found that green tea significantly reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure compared to a placebo, including significant reductions in people with prehypertension and stage 1 hypertension.

Sci Rep 2014;4:6251

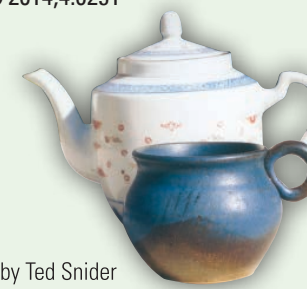


Photo by Ted Snider

Black Cohosh Brings Relief During Menopause

Black cohosh has now been shown in yet another double-blind study to bring relief to menopausal women.

This time, 84 women were given either a placebo or 6.5mg of black cohosh extract containing .12-.18mg 27-deoxyactein for 8 weeks.

Black cohosh significantly reduced hot flashes and sweats. Hot flashes went from 5.9 a week to only 1.07 a week in the black cohosh group versus 5.11 a week to 3.92 in the placebo group.

J Caring Sci 2013; 2:105-13

