

Medicinal mushrooms like reishi, maitake can help fight cancer

by Mike Adams, the Health Ranger, NaturalNews Editor
Originally published October 23 2009

(NaturalNews) The cure for cancer already exists. But it wasn't created in a lab, and it wasn't funded by pink-ribbon products or walkathons. It was created for free by Mother Nature, and it exists as a collection of literally thousands of powerful anti-cancer phytonutrients found in **medicinal mushrooms**.

Medicinal mushrooms contain some of the most potent medicine in the world. They are living pharmaceutical factories, but they file no patents and ask for no royalties. They just mind their own business, manufacturing healing medicines day by day, and waiting for someone wise and humble enough to come along and pick them.

Here, we've assembled a unique collection of supporting statements about medicinal mushrooms and cancer from some of the top authors in the industry. If you (or someone you know) suffers from any form of cancer, make sure to send them this information so they can learn what their conventional cancer doctor won't dare tell them... that **medicinal mushrooms make chemotherapy virtually obsolete!**

Beating cancer with the help of medicinal mushrooms

Many of the medicinal mushrooms, including chaga mushroom, maitake mushroom, ganoderma mushroom, and cordyceps mushroom, contain cancer-preventive and cancer-fighting actions. Research has focused on the polysaccharides with beta 1,3 glucan linkages. Indole-3-carbinol is a nutrient found in large quantities in cruciferous vegetables. It is a potent antagonist of breast cancer, reducing formation of cancerous compounds from hormones and participating in blockage of cancer cell progression.

- The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know About Chinese, Western, and Ayurvedic Herbal Treatments *by Alan Keith Tillotson, Ph.D., A.H.G., D.Ay.*

Other mushroom extracts that have been shown to have clinical effectiveness against human cancers are D-fraction extracted from the Maitake mushroom, and extracts from the split gill, turkey tail and Reishi mushrooms. In 1998, Maitake Products received FDA approval for an Investigational New Drug Phase II pilot study of maitake mushroom extract in the treatment of advanced breast and prostate cancer. There is also some evidence that the consumption of mushrooms in the diet may ward off cancer.

- You Don't Have to be Afraid of Cancer Anymore *by Bill Sardi*

As with many of the medicinal mushrooms, Shiitake has been shown to be of benefit as an adjuvant cancer therapy. It has been shown to improve specific immune markers (including natural killer cells, tumor necrosis factor, T-helper cells, and a variety of interleukins), and patient outcomes.

- The Health Benefits Of Medicinal Mushrooms *by Mark Stengler*

Reishi is one of the most versatile medicinal mushrooms. It has long been used in Asia as an energy tonic to promote longevity and overall health. Studies indicate that reishi is an antioxidant and contains polysaccharides and other compounds that may boost the immune system. Reishi is taken to counter bacteria and viruses and has shown promise as an agent to help prevent or treat cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, and other conditions. Russian researchers at the Cancer Research Center in Moscow have had positive results using reishi extracts to boost the immunity of cancer patients.

- *The Health Benefits Of Medicinal Mushrooms by Mark Stengler*

Cancer patients may also wish to investigate medicinal mushrooms (such types as reishi, shiitake, cordyceps, maitake, agaricus, and coriolus) as immune-boosting companions to chemotherapy. These medicinal mushrooms are sources of antitumor and immunity-modulating polysaccharides (a type of carbohydrate) that have been extensively researched. Formulas containing concentrated extracts of medicinal mushrooms are available; talk with your oncologist about which he or she might recommend.

- *Supplement Your Prescription: What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutrition by Hyla Cass, M.D.*

Like many other medicinal mushrooms, reishi mushroom can be used to treat cancer patients due to its ability to activate NK cells, macrophages, T-lymphocytes, and cytokines, all important immune system components. Kee Chang Huang reports that reishi "exerts a synergistic effect with other anticancer chemotherapeutic agents or radiotherapy, to augment the clinical therapeutic effect in the treatment of cancer patients."

- *The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know About Chinese, Western, and Ayurvedic Herbal Treatments by Alan Keith Tillotson, Ph.D., A.H.G., D.Ay.*

It takes about 15 pounds of reishi mushrooms to produce 1 pound of the powdered concentrate. Medicinal mushrooms make a significant contribution to the healing process by enhancing and stimulating the body's own immune system. This is a very important factor in diseases like cancer and HIV, which have components unique to each individual. In my protocols for people with cancer, I always include one or more medicinal mushroom extract products. Descriptions of some of the more frequently used mushrooms follow.

- *Herbal Medicine, Healing and Cancer: A Comprehensive Program for Prevention and Treatment by Donald R. Yance, Jr., C.N., M.H., A.H.G., with Arlene Valentine*

Although the Mayo Clinic regards the use of medicinal mushrooms as more traditional than scientific, they operate in a manner similar to prescription drugs known as monoclonal antibodies. Cancer patients need to understand the disconnect between the supposed mission to cure cancer and the objective of the companies that make monoclonal antibodies, which appears to be profits above delivery of an effective treatment. The total therapeutic monoclonal antibodies market was estimated at \$296 million in 2002, and was projected to surge to \$2.8 billion by 2010.

- *You Don't Have to be Afraid of Cancer Anymore by Bill Sardi*

In another study, researchers exposed mice to a known urinary bladder carcinogen, N-butyl-N'-butanolnitrosoamine (BBN), every day for eight weeks and then fed them medicinal mushrooms, including maitake, shiitake, and oyster mushrooms. All of the mice treated with BBN developed bladder cancer. While each of the mushrooms

reduced the number of bladder cancers, maitake was clearly most effective (carcinomas were observed in 46.7 percent of the maitake-treated mice compared to 52.9 percent and 65 percent for shiitake and oyster, respectively).

- *Natural Cancer Cures: The Definitive Guide to Using Dietary Supplements to Fight and Prevent Cancer* by *Freedom Press*

There have been 150 species of medicinal mushrooms found to inhibit the growth of different kinds of tumors, especially cancers of the stomach, esophagus, and lungs, but chaga seems to stand out from the rest. I learned about this mushroom from herbalist David Winston, who told me it has been used traditionally to treat different forms of cancer in Siberia, Canada, Scandinavia, the United States, and Russia. Chaga is a fungal parasite that draws its nutrients out of living trees, rather than from the ground.

- *The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know About Chinese, Western, and Ayurvedic Herbal Treatments* by *Alan Keith Tillotson, Ph.D., A.H.G., D.Ay.*

Japanese products containing LEM, a polysaccharide-rich extract from the shiitake mushroom, and similar extracts from maitake are currently undergoing trials in Japan and the U.S. to test their effectiveness in treating various forms of cancer. They show promise for treating people suffering from various forms of cancer and AIDS and are currently in strong demand in Japan.

- *Medicinal Mushrooms: An Exploration of Tradition, Healing, & Culture (Herbs and Health Series)* by *Christopher Hobbs*

Goro Chihara notes that medicinal mushrooms such as shiitake can play an important role in augmenting "intrinsic host defense mechanisms" - boosting the body's inherent abilities to fight off invading agents. He says that such "host defense potentiators" should be a more important focus for cancer research than the current fascination with cell-killing substances. Shiitake and reishi are the most common medicinal mushrooms in the United States today, though other varieties are beginning to become available either in fresh or packaged forms.

- *Medicinal Mushrooms: An Exploration of Tradition, Healing, & Culture (Herbs and Health Series)* by *Christopher Hobbs*

In Japan, pushcart vendors on the streets still sell medicinal mushrooms to the average citizen who uses them to maintain health and promote longevity. Some Japanese people have even been said to travel hundreds of miles in order to collect wild mushrooms that only grow on very old plum trees - such as the Reishi - renowned as a cure for cancer and degenerative diseases. Likewise, for over 3,000 years the Chinese have used and revered many fungi for their health-giving properties, especially tonics for the immune system (Liu and Bau, 1980; Yun-Chang, 1985).

- *Medicinal Mushrooms: An Exploration of Tradition, Healing, & Culture (Herbs and Health Series)* by *Christopher Hobbs*

Often called the "king of mushrooms," shiitake is just one of a number of medicinal mushrooms currently under study at research centers in Germany, the United States, Japan, and China. Shiitake is being used for a wide variety of conditions involving depressed immune function, from frequent colds to cancer. In Japan, physicians prescribe shiitake in two different forms to treat many health conditions, including asthma, hepatitis B, ulcers, high cholesterol, AIDS, kidney inflammation, herpes, and various skin problems.

- *The Encyclopedia of Popular Herbs* by *Robert S. McCaleb, Evelyn Leigh, and Krista Morien*

In the 1980s, Japanese researchers began to investigate the folklore behind medicinal mushrooms and found that many had truly remarkable properties. For example, maitake mushroom stimulates the immune system by activating T-cells, the body's natural defenders against viruses and cancer cells. Recent animal studies have shown that maitake extract can shrink tumors in mice even better than a common chemotherapy drug.

- *Earl Mindell's Supplement Bible: A Comprehensive Guide to Hundreds of NEW Natural Products that Will Help You Live Longer, Look Better, Stay Healthier, ... and Much More!* by *Earl Mindell, R.Ph., Ph.D.*

Here is a brief summary of published studies on medicinal mushrooms and beta glucans: Mushroom polysaccharides have remarkable anti-tumor activity. Mushrooms have anti-hyperlipidemic, hypotensive, and hypoglycemic actions. Beta-glucan from maitake mushrooms may induce apoptosis in prostate cancer cells. Shiitake extracts have reduced cholesterol and have anti-viral effects. Mushrooms are high fiber and function as prebiotics, antioxidants, and antibiotics.

- *The Anti-Aging Solution: 5 Simple Steps to Looking and Feeling Young* by *Vincent Giampapa, Ronald Pero, and Marcia Zimmerman*

As with most of the medicinal mushrooms, unique polysaccharides present in *H. erinaceus* have immune-enhancing properties, and preliminary studies are demonstrating some anticancer effects. The most intriguing potential of *H. erinaceus* is that it may stimulate the production of a substance known as Nerve Growth Factor (NGF). This specialized protein is necessary for the growth of sensory neurons. An in vitro study found that an extract from *Hericium erinaceus* mushroom promoted myelin sheath growth on brain cells.

- *The Health Benefits Of Medicinal Mushrooms* by *Mark Stengler*

Two species of medicinal mushrooms employed for healing purposes by Mazatec Indian shamans in southern Mexico have gone extinct in the past half century. And tribes themselves continue to disappear. This is just as great a tragedy, because almost every plant or plant derivative employed for medicinal purposes by Western society was investigated scientifically after being observed in use by "primitive" cultures. Everything from codeine for pain to quinine for malaria to podo- phyllotoxin for cancer is based on plants discovered by ancient healers.

- *Medicine Quest: In Search of Nature's Healing Secrets* by *Mark J. Plotkin*

Shiitake and reishi offer a diverse range of potential health benefits. You can take all of these supplements in perhaps eight to ten pills or capsules daily. If you take just three or four of these natural supplements at breakfast and the same number later in the day, you will have substantially increased your energy levels, boosted your immune system, lowered your risk of heart disease and cancer, and strengthened and balanced your overall system.

- *Medicine Quest: In Search of Nature's Healing Secrets* by *Mark J. Plotkin*