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The great Christmas weight loss gift: mushrooms

If you want to eat well over the festive season and lose weight, then mushrooms may be your answer, according to leading nutrition expert Glenn Cardwell.

Mr Cardwell, an Accredited Practising Dietitian, said the start of the Christmas season often prompted people to consider their eating habits before fronting up to family and friends over the holidays.

He said research by Dr Lawrence Cheskin from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health showed the benefit of including foods that have fewer kilojoules per weight – the so called “lower energy dense foods” that include mushrooms, fruits and vegetables – in the diet.

“The preliminary findings from the research highlight that the simple act of replacing high energy dense foods such as fatty foods/meats with low energy dense foods like mushrooms tricks the body into a lower overall kilojoule intake.”

While the study found that the substitution of a 110 gram hamburger beef patty with the same weight of portabella mushroom directly saved 420 kJ per day, participants were found to actually eat 1590 kJ less per day, suggesting the powerful ability of mushrooms to make a meal even more filling.

It also suggests that substituting high energy dense food with low energy dense versions could be a simple way to lose weight in the long term. Saving only 1000 kJ a day could mean a weight loss of 12kg a year.

According to the researchers, participants in the study readily accepted the substitution and did not compensate for the lower calorie mushroom meal by eating more food later in the day.

Dr Cheskin said the most intriguing finding was that subjects seemed to accept mushrooms as a palatable and suitable culinary substitute for meat and didn't compensate for the lower calorie mushroom meal by eating more food later in the day.

Mr Cardwell said the research confirmed that mushrooms were a great tasting weight loss weapon.



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"The real benefit of low energy dense foods in relation to weight management is the fact that they help to make us feel full.

"Mushrooms are ideally suited to weight control because they are low in fat, low in kilojoules and low in energy density, making them suitable for everyone including those who have heart disease or diabetes.

Mr Cardwell said although mushrooms were neither a fruit or vegetable they were a ready source of B group vitamins and minerals and were also one of the highest antioxidant foods found in nature.

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For further information please contact Glenn Cardwell on 08 9367 3556 / 0413 806 406.