

# the great all-rounder<sup>®</sup> Mushrooms<sup>™</sup> for Life



## Mushroom Fact Sheet No.2 – Antioxidants

**For a long time, scientists have known that adequate fruits and vegetables reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers, quite possibly through their antioxidant capabilities. Mushrooms are a rich source of antioxidants, as confirmed by laboratory analysis. In one study, mushrooms were placed in the top 5 highest antioxidant levels when compared to 30 common vegetables.**

**Antioxidants** are natural compounds in food that help neutralise the free radicals produced by the body. Free radicals are also quite natural, but tend to cause damage to all parts of the body over time, hence speeding up the ageing process. One example is the damage that can happen to DNA in the nucleus of all cells. If it becomes damaged, then chemicals within the body work to correct the damage before it becomes a cancerous cell. If the antioxidants within the body get overwhelmed then compounds in food give a helping hand.

In 2005 it was found that mushrooms are very high in the powerful antioxidant **ergothioneine**, in amounts many times more than found in wheat germ or chicken liver, previously thought to be the highest sources. As the body does not produce ergothioneine, dietary sources are important. You can get your ergothioneine from both cooked and raw mushrooms, as ergothioneine levels do not decrease with cooking.

That same year, scientists were surprised to find an ergothioneine transporter protein in the blood. Transporter proteins only exist in the blood if they have a specific role. For example, haemoglobin is a transporter protein for carrying oxygen to cells. To find one for ergothioneine suggests that humans have long evolved as mushroom eaters.

Mushrooms are particularly high in **phenolic compounds** that have been long recognised for their antioxidant capabilities. A serve of mushrooms also provides about a quarter of an adult's requirements of **selenium**, an antioxidant mineral.

Put all the news together and it makes mushrooms one of the highest antioxidant foods on the market. It is good sense that mushrooms should regularly feature on your healthy eating menu.

Recipe selected from [www.cookingwithmushrooms.com](http://www.cookingwithmushrooms.com)

Per Serve	Protein	Fat	Sat. Fat	Carb	kJ	Folate
Mushroom, Prawn & Asparagus Stir Fry	41g	12g	1.5g	65g	2230	160mg



For more information visit [www.mushroomsforlife.net](http://www.mushroomsforlife.net)