

Introductory Text

When you sit down to a meal of mushrooms, the mineral content is probably one of the last things on your mind. And yet the potassium, phosphorus, copper and selenium in mushrooms play an important part in keeping our blood pressure healthy, reducing the risk of strokes and providing us with strong bones and teeth. To find out more why not LISTEN to Accredited Practising Dietitian, author and university lecturer, Glenn Cardwell in his discussion with Tony McManus. A transcript of the interview is also available [HERE](#).

Mushrooms and minerals

Interview Glenn Cardwell / Tony McManus

Date – 3rd September 2007

Tony - Glenn Cardwell is an Accredited Practising Dietitian, author, university lecturer and an expert on mushroom nutrition. Glenn is here with us to answer some questions on mushrooms and their mineral content. Mushrooms are a favourite addition to the menu for most people; tell us, is it a fruit or vegetable?

Glenn Cardwell – That’s a good question Tony because I often get asked that question, but actually it’s neither in reality because first plants evolved, then the mushroom evolved after plants, and prior to animals evolving. So in reality it's like a separate food group and this may partly explain why we are seeing quite a different nutrition profile with mushrooms as compared to, say, vegetables.

Tony – Well, let's talk about the minerals in mushrooms. What are the kind of minerals you would expect to find?

Glenn Cardwell - Well there is a whole pile of minerals in mushrooms Tony and the most abundant ones are potassium, phosphorus, copper and selenium, and in fact it is the number-one source of copper and selenium.

Tony - Isn't potassium good for blood pressure?

Glenn Cardwell - Yes indeed! And, in fact, foods that have got a high potassium content such as mushrooms and fruits and vegetables are actually linked to keeping your blood pressure healthy and reducing your risk of strokes as well.

Tony - What about phosphorus. What does that do?

Glenn Cardwell - Well you don't often hear about phosphorus but everyone has heard about calcium of course. Calcium and phosphorus combine to give us strong bones and strong teeth.

Tony - We don't often think of copper as an essential mineral, do we?

Glenn Cardwell - No, for it very rarely gets spoken about. Mushrooms are one of the highest copper sources, which is very important for the production of red blood cells. It's also part of antioxidant enzymes, so it's a very important healthy mineral for us.

Tony - Now most of us have heard of selenium. That's an antioxidant, is it not?

Glenn Cardwell - You are dead right. In fact selenium is a natural antioxidant and it is a very powerful antioxidant too. A serve of mushrooms will give you about a quarter of your selenium requirements and it has been implicated in reducing the risk of things like heart disease and cancer.

Tony - They are absolutely beautiful. How much mushrooms do you reckon we should we be eating to get the true benefits, the mineral benefits?

Glenn Cardwell - Well you need about 100 g Tony, on a daily basis, and that works out to about three button mushrooms a day. And of course if you want more information on the health benefits of mushrooms then I suggest go to www.mushroomsforlife.net