



26 June 2007

## **Fight winter colds and flu with real food**

Boosting your immune system this winter could be as simple as eating white button mushrooms, with recent US research highlighting natural immunity against viruses and tumours through enhanced natural killer cell activity.

Tufts University laboratory research published in *The Journal of Nutrition* showed mushroom intake was able to enhance killer cell activity and cytokines, which are hormone-like proteins that play an important role in defending the body against tumors and viral infections.

The results suggest that consumption of white button mushrooms may increase the natural immune response against tumours and viral infections.

Accredited Practising Dietitian, Glenn Cardwell said the research highlighted the potential to eat foods that naturally boost the immune system in order to prepare for the onset of winter and the cold and flu season.

Mr Cardwell said while it was understood that fruits and vegetables provide a natural resistance to colds, the special bug-fighting abilities of mushrooms was less well known.

"The challenge for us all is to get "real" and eat a balanced diet that includes foods that can naturally boost our immune system."

"Mushrooms are a great source of selenium, a known antioxidant important for a healthy immune system. A serve of mushrooms provides a quarter of selenium requirements according to new Australian figures released last week."

Mr Cardwell said mushrooms contain the highest amount of ergothioneine, which has been shown to have strong antioxidant properties and to provide cellular protection within the human body.

"Not only are mushrooms high in antioxidants, but they also have a range of B group vitamins and essential minerals and are low in kilojoules and have no fat."

A healthy immune function is a combination of regular exercise and plenty of fruits and vegetables. Research made public in May at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting in Washington DC has revealed the additional immune benefits of adding mushrooms to the diet."

Mr Cardwell said while it was tempting to reach for a quick fix vitamin supplement, real food alternatives were a healthier choice.



“We now realise that natural foods offer a lot more than just vitamins and minerals. They have a huge range of bioactive compounds that promote health, probably in region of 5000-10000 compounds, and virtually none are found in supplements.”



Why not warm up the family this Winter with an old favourite – Cream of Mushroom Soup.

**Cream of Mushroom Soup** (Graphic available on request)

Preparation: 15 minutes      cooking: 28 minutes serves: 4

60g butter

2 medium leeks, trimmed, halved & thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed 300g flat mushrooms, diced 300g cup mushrooms, diced

1 / 3cup plain flour

4 cups chicken stock

2 / 3cup cream

1 / 3cup chopped flat-leaf parsley salt & ground black pepper, to taste toasted bread, to serve

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until butter begins to foam. Add leeks & garlic & cook, stirring often, for 3-4 minutes or until soft.

2. Add mushrooms & cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until mushrooms are tender. Add flour & cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes.

3. Gradually add stock, stirring constantly. Bring to the boil, stirring constantly, over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low & cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes.

4. Remove from heat & process to desired consistency. Stir in cream & parsley. Heat soup over medium-low heat, without boiling, until hot. Season with salt & pepper & serve with toasted bread.

Ends

Released by Chris Rowley – (02) 8901 0329 / 0415 140 253. For further information please contact Greg Seymour on (02) 4577- 6877.