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Mushrooms – great tasting heart health

The health benefit of mushrooms has been highlighted in new research that found very high levels of antioxidants linked to the protection from heart disease.

US researcher, Dr Joy Dubost, Pennsylvania State University, examined mushrooms for the antioxidant compounds, ergothioneine and polyphenols – the same beneficial compounds found in red wine, tea and cocoa. The report published on-line in the journal *Food Chemistry* found high levels of the antioxidants known to protect DNA and proteins in the body to slow down the ageing process and protect the body from diseases such as cancer, heart disease and dementia.

This finding backs previous research finding mushrooms had the highest level of ergothioneine and has one of the highest overall antioxidant levels of any food.

Accredited practising dietitian, Glenn Cardwell welcomed the news ahead of National Heart Week and said it was a timely reminder for all Australians to get serious about heart health to avoid becoming a deathly statistic.

Mr Cardwell said National Heart Week – 29 April – 5 May was an ideal time for everyone to take the first step and focus on habits that can lead to better heart health.

"With one Australian dying every fifteen minutes due to heart and blood vessel disease, heart health needs to be taken seriously and a balanced lifestyle with plenty of exercise and a good diet is the key to long-term better health.

"While there are no shortcuts to exercise, you can make things a little easier on yourself by incorporating foods that have been shown to be beneficial into your diet."

Mr Cardwell said the combination of foods such as fish and mushrooms provided a range of benefits, bringing together the healthy omega-3 fats found in fish with the folate, antioxidants and potassium in mushrooms to produce a great tasting, nutritional package that could assist in avoiding high blood pressure and stroke.



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"If you want to help to reduce the risk of heart disease the combination of omega-3 fats from fish with the B group vitamins and the fibre in mushrooms can help to do just that!"

Mr Cardwell said there was accumulating evidence that a high level of homocysteine in the blood was a cause of heart disease in adults.

"Researchers believe extra folate in your diet will help lower blood homocysteine and help to protect your body against future heart disease. Eating mushrooms not only provides you with 10 per cent of your daily folate requirement but it is also in a form that is easily absorbed by your body."

In addition to this Mr Cardwell said US scientists had found that mushrooms were rich in cholesterol lowering chitin and the heart healthy beta-glutan.

"The point to remember is that good health is all about balance - and eating tasty, nutritious foods that are good for you is one easy way of helping to maintain that balance."

"If you are committed to heart health, then why not add some more mushrooms to your diet and capture all the benefits, with all the great taste," he said.

Mushrooms really are the Great "healthy" All-rounder.

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