

Power Mushrooms

Three Remarkable Healing Japanese Mushrooms:

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Power Mushroom Formula (Power-Shrooms)

Energetically: Oriental Medicine believes that healing Mushrooms, remove dead decaying matter from the forest floors, just as in the energy fields of our own body-minds. Mushrooms such as Reishi, Shiitake and Maitake are the stars of the mushroom realm, they also convert our own metabolic and psychic wastes, transforming our stagnant or festering emotions and negative feelings, offering the opportunity to raising the spirit and freeing the mind toward more spiritual pursuits. Just see what they have been proven to do bio-chemically and hope fully you'll be inspired to add them to your Wellness Supplement Plan or at least regularly to your diet.

Reishi Mushroom (*Ganoderma lucidum*)



This mushroom has been much sought after in the East for the last four thousand years. It was fervently looked for because of its “Elixir of Life” qualities. It has also been known under various other names: holy mushroom, herb of spiritual potency, herb of deathlessness, and shaman's tree fungus. This mushroom was held in such high esteem by the Daoists of Ancient China as the “Supreme Tonic” ever since the first Chinese Emperor (221-210 B.C.) is said to have sent envoys on a search throughout the Eastern Seas, to search for the herb of immortality, and they

returned from Japan with Reishi mushroom. It would have been a tough search then as now, for in Japan one mushroom is said to be found on 10,000 Japanese plum trees. Extremely rare, until the cultivation of this mushroom. In the 1980s, a Japanese researcher Shigeaki Mori developed an intricate and effective method of cultivating them, which has made them widely available and affordable. Today they can even purchased in most health food markets for cooking. Its classified by TCM as sweet in taste, neutral leaning to gently warming.

I often use this herb in formulas to “Calm the Spirit”, (it has demonstrated the ability to calm caffeine jitters,) strengthen immunity, strengthen the heart, lungs and liver. This mushroom is used as a general health tonic and as folk medicine for liver problems, heart conditions, asthma, cancer, high blood pressure, and arthritis.

Reishi is central to *Fu Zheng* therapy of Traditional Chinese medicine. *Fu Zheng* is a class of herbs that Chinese herbalists believe to be the most powerful herbs for all-around strength and health, these herbs are often formulated together for cancer and other chronic illnesses. Reishi has been well researched and tested, mostly in China and Japan. Scientists have researched several ingredients in them that have pharmacological (medicinal) effects on the body. Reishi mushrooms contain compounds called polysaccharides, which have been shown to help the body fight cancerous tumors and also stimulate the immune system to combat infections and viruses. In studies on mice, reishi mushrooms have shown very strong results against cancerous tumors. Other substances, called triterpenes, have been found in Reishi mushrooms that have demonstrated to lower blood pressure and improve circulation that may account for its success for age related intellectual decline in dementia and pre-Alzheimer's conditions and the increased circulation need to resist Altitude sickness. (I have used Reishi, Siberian Ginseng and Ginkgo for remarkable success for altitude sickness and jet lag.)

Reishi mushrooms contain sterols, which may influence the hormonal system, and natural anti-histamines, which reduce allergic reactions and inflammation in the body. Some studies have shown to increase white blood cell count, reduce allergic reactions, and have a calming effect on the central nervous system. Because of its neutral classification by TCM its considered safe for everyone to use as an immune tonic, this is especially important to consider when using a tonic for someone with auto-immune disorder, immune stimulation herbs such as Echinacea are not well tolerated by this group. Reishi helps build-up the immunity with-out revving-up immune responses, that would only be further aggravating to already overactive auto-immune responses, such as Lupus, Chron's Disease, etc. It can be used as the gentlest of herbs that are called for in such extreme food allergies of leaky gut syndrome, where the body can generate an allergic response to anything ingested. It helps to calm and generate antihistamines to switch-off and block the inflammatory responses of allergic response. Reishi's antihistamines compounds also block the inflammation and swelling so often associated with respiratory allergies and asthma. They prevent the constriction of airways within the lungs that make breathing so difficult. Reishi is use with AIDS patients and has demonstrated its ability to help raise T-cell levels. I have used it successfully with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome where it is possible to raise up immune responses and energy levels in general over a long period of time.

Reishi has been shown to inhibit bacteria and viruses, especially useful for trying to build-up energy deficient people only to see them get knocked-back to where they were, by an opportunistic infection. It's compounds stimulate the maturation of immune cells known as macrophages which engulf and digest infectious bacteria. Reish is exceptional useful for stress situations, where Reishi helps the body to adapt, while nourishing the

nervous system and providing immune support at the same time. Under this stress the cardio-protective qualities are also especially important. Reishi has demonstrated blood pressure lowering qualities and cholesterol lowering properties that help prevent atherosclerotic changes in the blood vessel walls. A recent study of chronic bronchitis in China showed 2,000 patients experienced from 60% to 90% improvement using Reishi. One of the areas I have used Reishi a lot in recent years, has been for the treatment of Hepatitis. Used for Liver diseases in Chinese and Japanese herbalism, where Reishi was thought generally to release “stuck emotions” which would aggravate the “free flowing” health of the liver This would allow the patient more opportunity to turn to spiritual pursuits. Reishi is said to elevate the spirit, it’s a mood-elevating substance.

Traditionally, reishi is believed to help transform the individual into a more spiritual being. Just as mushrooms transform decayed material on the forest floor, into life-giving nourishment, so Reishi converts our own metabolic and psychic waster our hostility and other negative feelings, offering the opportunity to raising the spirit and freeing the mind toward more spiritual pursuits. I have proven to myself what Chinese herbalists have found for centuries, that Reishi is especially useful for hepatitis patients who have not suffered severe loss of liver function or those whose conditions are not complicated by emotional stress, especially anger and frustration. According to TCM, especially shut-down and stagnant the Liver “energy”, makes it more difficult to respond to Reishi’s healing messages. It is also useful for conditions where fatty deposits are left with in the liver that may be irritated by alcohol or excessive fatty foods.

This is probably the most useful medicinal mushroom in the world, it most definitely should be in all our bathroom cabinets as a most useful “wellness tool”.

Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*)

Shiitake, comes from the Japanese “*Shii*”, which means oak and *take* which means mushroom. The Shiitake mushroom is the most widely cultivated gourmet mushroom in the world and is both a prized medicine and



culinary delight. Production dramatically increased in the late 1940's after the development of modern cultivation techniques by the Japanese. Shiitake is a primary wood decomposer; it degrades the lignin and other components of wood and extracts the nutrients to feed itself. Shiitake has anti-fungal, anti-tumor, and anti-viral effects. Scientists today are finding that shiitake can help the body combat heart disease, cancer, and viruses.

In the 1970's and 1980's there was a major research effort in Japan to understand the medicinal properties of the mushroom Shiitake and these efforts develop patentable medicines, Shiitake is often used in the Japanese diet and its cultivation dates back to the 13th century in China. By the 1980's it had become one of the top agricultural crops in Japan. In 1970, Dr. Goro Chihara, of the National Cancer Center Research Institute in Tokyo, isolated and purified polysaccharide compounds from shiitake that exhibited strong antitumor activities. The most active of these compounds he called lentinan. Lentinan is an extract of Shiitake which is the name given a highly purified polysaccharide fraction extracted from Shiitake mushrooms, it is an approved drug in Japan. It is generally administered by injection and has been used as an agent to prolong survival of patients in conventional cancer therapy as well as in AIDS research. LEM is another extract from Shiitake. This protein-bound sugar is soluble in water and has been the subject of intense research. In Japan, mushroom extracts like LEM and Lenitan have become the leading prescription treatment for cancer

Shiitake has been revered in Japan and China as both a food and medicinal herb for thousands of years. Around the year 200AD. It was offered to the Japanese Emperor, Chuai, by the Kyusuyu people of Japan. In China Wu Ri, a physician from the 14th century noted its ability to increase energy, dispel hunger, cure colds, eliminate worms and nourish the blood circulatory system. Wu-Rui described shiitake as a food that activates "Qi". Activating the circulating life force, which helps protect the immune system. Shiitake's antiviral effects are believed to be caused by Shiitake's ability to produce interferon. Researchers have also reported that consumption of Shiitake mushrooms lowers blood cholesterol levels by as much as 45 percent especially in those already on a high fat diet. The most dramatic results occurred when high-cholesterol foods were eaten simultaneously with Shiitake it seemed to block or counter the cholesterol uptake. Research conducted in Japan identified a specific amino acid in shiitake that helps speed up the processing of cholesterol in the liver. The active principle is an amino acid named eritadenine, lowers all lipid components of serum lipoproteins in both animals and man. Shiitake has also shown the capacity to lower high blood pressure in laboratory. One study reported that Shiitake was able to reduce weight when taken by women over a 6 week period without changing their diet. An interesting point to report is that that this mushroom blocks the formation of cancer causing nitrates, chemicals found in meats and many preserved products, it would seem shiitake mushrooms should be included in the menu's to counter balance these carcinogenic substances.

Maitake (*Grifola frondosa*)

Maitake (*Grifola frondosa*) means "dancing mushroom" in Japanese. Supposedly named in ancient Japan, because those who found it knew they would be paid the mushrooms weight in silver, and then they would



celebrate by dancing! Many doctors in Japan also must be dancing because of maitake use to lower blood pressure and blood lipids, key risk factors in cardiovascular disease, without having to resort to powerful pharmaceuticals. Yet maitake may best be known for its cancer-fighting properties. One study in post operative bladder cancer patients showed reduced rates of reoccurrence after surgery 65% down to 33%. Researchers have also discovered that Maitake when taken with mitomycin a chemotherapy inhibits the growth of breast cancer cells, even after the tumors are well formed, preventing the spread of cancer to the liver. These anti cancer compounds are believed to be Maitake D-fraction. Used for stomach, colorectal, liver, lung cancers or leukemia by Chinese doctors.

Some studies also show maitake's liver protective qualities for Hepatitis B even clearing antigens in 40% of those in one study. It is used in Japan to protect the liver from drug-induced Hepatitis. It contains grifolan, an important bet-glucan polysaccharide (molecule composed of many sugar molecules linked together). Grifolan has been shown to activate macrophages, a type of cell consider the "heavy artillery" of the immune system, explains Larry A. Walker, Ph.D., R.D., author of "Natural Products Update," published in Drug Topics, June 1997. D-fraction, one of the polysaccharides in maitake, also energized the cellular immune system.

People with non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) may also benefit from maitake, according to researchers Hiroaki Nanba and Keiko Kubo, authors of "Mushroom biology and mushroom products". Researchers investigated a specific, high-molecular polysaccharide in maitake called the X-fraction. They found that mice given maitake had an increased ability to recognize glucose, and the control group had higher blood glucose levels. The researchers suggested that maitake can reduce insulin resistance, thereby increasing insulin sensitivity.

Power Mushrooms: Three Healing Wonders of Japanese Mushrooms Combined.

Maitake, shiitake, and reishi mushrooms have many overlapping properties: all boost immune function, all support cardiovascular health, and all show promise in lowering the risk of, or treating cancer. However, maitake is specifically recommended for the stomach and intestines, as well as blood sugar levels; shiitake treats nutritional deficiencies and liver ailments; and reishi promotes respiratory health and spirituality. These medicinal mushrooms have been shown to boost heart health; lower the risk of cancer, promote immune function; ward off viruses, bacteria, and fungi; reduce inflammation; combat allergies; help balance blood sugar levels; and support the body's detoxification mechanisms. I often use all three combined into one formula to be taken regularly as part of a Wellness Supplement Plan and at very least make an effort to include them regularly in your diet for your optimum health.



