



Childhood Obesity

How Fresh Mushrooms Can Help

Childhood obesity is on the rise. The latest Canadian Community Health Survey found that the combined rate of children and teens who are overweight or obese has jumped from fifteen to twenty-six percent over the span of just 25 years (1978-2004).

Unfortunately, the problem doesn't end there. About 70% of obese children become obese adults, increasing the risk of their developing chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease as well as developing poor body image and self-esteem-related eating disorders. Even more disconcerting is that many obese and overweight children are developing health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and joint problems, at very early ages.



So what can be done? One strategy that can help is for kids to get their daily servings of fruit and vegetables. Children and teens who eat fruit and vegetables 5 or more times a day are much less likely to be overweight or obese than those who eat them less often.

Fresh mushrooms add important variety to the diet. A one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) cup serving counts as one Vegetables or Fruit choice from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. Fresh mushrooms also offer many other benefits that promote good health in children and teens.

Fresh Mushrooms Can Help!

Adding the Antioxidants

- Fresh mushrooms contain significant levels of l-ergothioneine, which acts as an antioxidant in both cooked and raw mushrooms.
- Beta-glucans, a type of carbohydrate found in mushrooms, has potential anti-inflammatory activity, which may help protect the body against disease.

Essential Nutrients

- Growing kids need a wide variety of foods to get the nutrients they need. Fresh mushrooms are a good source of riboflavin, a source of copper, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, niacin and pantothenic acid.
- Fresh mushrooms also contribute to daily intakes of folate, thiamin, vitamin B6, iron, magnesium and zinc.

Fill Up on Fruit and Vegetables

- Fresh mushrooms have high water content, are low in fat and contain some fibre so they make a great choice for keeping hungry kids full without a lot of extra calories.
- Snacking on a variety of raw veggies, including mushrooms, with a low-fat dip means they are getting a serving of Vegetables and Fruit. They'll also be less likely to be tempted by less nutritious, processed snack foods.