



Fresh. Simple. Good.

Health Sheet

So, your concern is...

Childhood Obesity

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).¹

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.² 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.³

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.⁴

Fresh mushrooms add important variety to the diet. A one-half (½) 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.^{5 6}
- Beta-glucans, a type of carbohydrate found in mushrooms, has potential anti-inflammatory activity, which may help protect the body against disease.⁷

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.

Mushrooms Make a Difference⁸

- Sprinkle ½ cup sliced meaty portabella mushrooms on to a pizza instead of 3 oz. pepperoni.
Benefit: *save 394 calories, 36 g fat, 12 g saturated fat and 1383 mg sodium.*
- Toss ½ cup sliced crimini mushrooms into pasta sauces instead of 4 oz. lean ground beef.
Benefit: *save 297 calories, 19 g fat, 7 g saturated fat and 101 mg sodium.*
- Munch on ½ cup button mushrooms with 3 tablespoons fat-free ranch dressing instead of 3 ounces of plain potato chips.
Benefit: *save 404 calories, 31 g fat, 9 g saturated fat and 128 mg sodium.*

Make it with Mushrooms:

- Thread bite-sized raw veggies, including fresh mushrooms, on to skewers and serve with a low-fat dip for a quick and nutritious snack.
- Chop fresh mushrooms and add to spaghetti sauce, chili, stews, lasagna and casseroles so that picky eaters are more likely to try and enjoy them.
- For a fun family meal, have a make-your-own-pizza night. Be sure to have a variety of sliced fresh mushrooms on hand for the kids to choose from.
- A grilled portabella “burger” is a tasty and nutritious choice for teens who are vegetarian.
- For more adventurous teens, try them with a creamy risotto or pasta made with portabella or shiitake mushrooms.

Recipe Suggestion:

[Mushroom and Shrimp Pizza](#)

For more mushroom nutrition information, great tips and delicious recipes visit www.mushrooms.ca.

For more about healthy eating for children and teens visit Dietitians of Canada at www.dietitians.ca.

For an individualized copy of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating for your child or teen visit Health Canada, Food & Nutrition Section at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html. Or request a copy by calling 1-800-622-6232.

Disclaimer: The provided information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your Doctor. If you have further questions please consult with your Doctor or Registered Dietitian.

¹ Shields M. *Overweight Canadian Children and Adolescents*. Statistics Canada, 2005.

² Standing Committee on Health in the House of Commons. Report: Healthy Weight for Healthy Kids, March 2007 at www.ccfm.ca/pdfs/HealthyWeightsForHealthyKids.pdf.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Standing Committee on Health in the House of Commons. Report: Healthy Weight for Healthy Kids, March 2007 at www.ccfm.ca/pdfs/HealthyWeightsForHealthyKids.pdf.

⁵ Dubost NJ, Beelman RB, Peterson D and Royse DJ. Identification and Quantification of Ergothioneine in Cultivated Mushrooms by Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectroscopy. *Int J Med Mushr* 2006;8(3):215-222.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Pacheco-Sanchez M, Boutin Y, Angers P, Gosselin A and Tweddell RJ. A bioactive (1-3), (1-4)-beta-D-glucan from *Collybia dryophila* and other mushrooms. *Mycologia* 2006;98(2):180-185.

⁸ USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 19, 2006 at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>.