

HEALTH EFFECTS OF SOME MUSHROOMS

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The popularity of various mushroom coffees is surging. Here I discuss those mushrooms comprising Ryze coffee, which has gained a fan base. Mud coffee is similar and both promise improved energy without the caffeine of regularly brewed coffee.

In Chinese and Tibetan medicine, **CORDYSEPS MILITARIS** mushrooms have been used to boost energy, exercise performance, heart health, sexual desire, and penile erectile function. Claims that it boosts immune function are limited to boosting components of the immune system that increase inflammation, which might indiscriminately damage tissue in those with autoimmune and other diseases, rather than selectively eradicating infections and cancer. The name's etymological origin means club head. It appears that an indiscriminate club effect may be broad enough to hurt as much or more than it helps. The mushrooms must be cooked prior to consumption, and large amounts may cause abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, dry mouth, nausea, and rash in some people. However, they seem to be safe for most people when consumed in moderate doses of three to six grams per day for up to a year.

GANODERMA LUCIDUM: commonly known as **Reishi mushrooms**, contain anti-inflammatory and antioxidant polysaccharides and triterpenoids. People take the mushrooms to "support" the immune system and improve fatigue, depression, heart health and blood sugar control. They may also reduce joint pain in breast cancer patients taking aromatase inhibitors. In scientific studies, an extract of one of the major bio-active components has boosted numbers of blood cell types helpful for immune responses. In another study, an extract improved sleep and reduced stress. In some people, Reishi causes dizziness, itching, rash, headaches

and/or stomach upset, but most have tolerated them well.

TURKEY TAIL mushrooms (Coriolus or Trametes versicolor), with an abundance of bioactive β -glucans, are used primarily to modify immune function to reduce inflammation and treat or prevent cancers, particularly HER-2 positive breast cancer. While a few people react to them with nausea or vomiting, they are generally safe. An important concern is that they reduce metabolism of drugs normally cleared from the body by the liver enzyme p450 2C9, thereby increasing blood levels of drugs like anti-coagulants, seizure medications and common anti-inflammatories, thereby increasing their blood levels, so consumers should mention this to their prescribing doctors.

KING TRUMPET mushrooms have a pleasant, meaty flavor and are good sources of β -glucans, protein, fiber, B vitamins, copper, potassium and selenium. Studies show that they contain a chemical like the drug lovastatin, which lowers blood levels of the 'bad' cholesterol particle, LDL.

SHITAKE MUSHROOM consumption may improve cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and, by extension, heart health. They might also boost immune cell counts.

I wrote about **LION'S MANE** mushrooms mental benefits in October 2025 DrG'sMediSense. Suffice to say that they are calming and may improve brain function with aging.

RYZE or MUD COFFEES: Contains each of the first six mushroom species described above, plus half the amount of caffeine of a regular cup of coffee. Without knowing everyone's specific health needs, I can't make a universal recommendation for or against, though those with an autoimmune disease or taking any medication to avoid while

consuming turkey tail mushrooms should not use this product.

MUSHROOM SPECIES TO AVOID: *Amanita* species mushrooms, also called Death caps, which cause acute liver failure and death. **Also the psychedelic mushroom species *Conocybula*, *Galerina* (Deadly *Galerina*, Black Tooth, or Inky Cap), *Gymnopilus* (Magic or Spectacular Rustgill), *Inocybe*, *Panaeolus*, *Pluteus* (Fawn), and *Psilocybe***, all of which contain the hallucinogen psilocybin, unless, of course, you desire a magic trip, have a safe source and can limit the quantity to avoid psychosis, seizures, cardiac arrest, and death. Since the species' appearances vary, there is no simple way for a novice to identify them in the wild.