

Food Function and Medicinal Effect of Mushroom Fungi --Bioactive Biomolecules Obtained from Mushrooms--

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Summary

Several thousand species of mushrooms which are fungi (Basidiomycetes and Ascomycetes) inhabit the earth, including 1,500 species in Japan. Many of these species have high value as gene resources to which biotechnology can be applied to develop not only food materials (physiological functional food) but also as materials for the development of medicines. Many edible mushrooms are now being evaluated in terms of the quality and quantity of their components which relate to the nutrition and sensory properties both as static characteristics before meals and the bioregulation function as dynamic characteristics after meals. It is necessary to take into account not only the toxication possible by poisonous mushrooms gathered in the field but also the food sanitation practice associated with cultivation, preservation, processing and storage of edible mushrooms.