

Unique Herbal Formulas

Medicinal mushrooms and mushroom extracts are used worldwide to fight cancer and enhance and modulate immune response. *Lentinula edodes* (shiitake), *Grifola frondosa* (maitake), *Ganoderma lucidum* (mannentake), and *Cordyceps* have a history of medicinal use for millennia in parts of Asia. Research has indicated mushrooms have possible anti-cancer, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and liver-protective activities. These are six of the most well researched anti-cancer mushrooms rich in polysaccharides and beta glucans, the primary active immune-enhancing constituents (Xu, Towers & Li, 2006).

Reishi Mushroom, AKA Ling Zhi, or Mannentake, "The Mushroom of Immortality," is one of the great longevity tonics of Chinese Medicine used in cancer treatment in Traditional and Modern Chinese Medicine to improve vitality, strength, stamina, and to prolong life. Reishi enhances immune response, alleviates chemotherapy side effects such as nausea and kidney damage, and protects cellular DNA by raising antioxidant capacity (Chilkov, 2012).

Reishi contains polysaccharides that are effective in suppressing cancer cells. Research by Dr. Fukumi Morishiga at the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine took a hot water extract of Reishi (which concentrates the active ingredients) and showed that when used in conjunction with vitamin C (which humans, unlike animals, cannot make), macrophage activity was greatly stimulated. In his paper he showed that all manner of cancers from brain tumors to breast cancer regressed over time (Chilkov, 2012).

Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*), AKA Black Forest Tree Mushroom, or Xiang Gu (Fragrant Mushroom) is a tender and tasty mushroom found in many Asian cuisines. It is considered both a delicacy and a medicinal mushroom. Shiitake contains a glucan called AHCC (Active Hexose Correlated Compound) and is widely used in alternative and complementary treatment of cancer in Japan due to its immune-enhancing functions. Lentinan, a compound found in Shiitake, is used as an intravenous anti-cancer drug with antitumor properties. Clinical studies have associated lentinan with a higher survival

© Kang Eastern Medicine

*Dr. Myeongae Kang, D.A.O.M. and Licensed Acupuncturist in Pasadena, California.
Phone: 818-807-8849 • Email: KangEasternMedicine@gmail.com*

rate, higher quality of life and lower recurrence of cancer (Chilkov, 2012).

Shiitake has been used in medicine for years as a blood "balancer" and particularly for lowering cholesterol levels. The National Cancer Center in Tokyo isolated lentinan, one of the active ingredients, and showed that the extract could reduce tumors in mice by 80 to 100 percent.

Coriolus versicolor (*Trametes versicolor*), AKA "Turkey Tail Mushroom" or Yun Zhi is one of the most well-researched medicinal mushrooms in the world. It is a biological response modifier. Turkey Tail has been used in Chinese Medicine as a tonic for centuries. Studies show that it improves survival rates and acts an immune modulator with immune stimulating and anti-tumor properties. Some studies show that it can enhance the effects of chemotherapy cancer treatment and reduce the side effects of radiation therapy (Chilkov, 2012).

Maitake (*Grifola Frondosa*), AKA Cloud Mushroom, or Hui Shu Hua, is used in traditional Chinese and Japanese medicine to enhance the immune system. It is one of the major mushrooms in Japanese cooking. Studies have shown that it can enhance both the innate immune response to fight infections as well as adaptive immune response conferring long-term immune enhancement. Maitake also protects cells with its antioxidant properties and decreases the inflammatory factor COX2 enzyme; the enzyme common in cancer physiology. Studies have also shown that Maitake has potential anti-metastatic properties inhibiting the proliferation and spread of cancer (Chilkov, 2012).

Cordyceps Sinensis, AKA Chinese Caterpillar Fungus, or Dong Chong Xia Cao, acts an immune stimulator by raising cancer- and virus-fighting T Cells and Natural Killer Cells and prolongs the life of white blood cells, improving resolution of infections. It has demonstrated anti-tumor properties and also protects the kidneys from chemotherapy side effects. It is one of the most widely used tonics in anti-cancer formulas in Chinese Medicine (Chilkov, 2012).

Agaricus Mushroom (*Agaricus blazei murill*), or Ji Song Rong, is a mushroom that originated in the rainforests of Brazil. The mushroom thrives in certain tropical areas of China and the Chinese have become the premier growers of Agaricus for the world. Agaricus is traditionally known as "God's Mushroom" because of its near

© Kang Eastern Medicine

*Dr. Myeongae Kang, D.A.O.M. and Licensed Acupuncturist in Pasadena, California.
Phone: 818-807-8849 • Email: KangEasternMedicine@gmail.com*

miraculous curative benefits to a wide range of disorders. People have used it to overcome numerous diseases and disorders relating to the immune system, cardiovascular system, digestion, and for weight management, diabetes, chronic and acute allergies, cataracts, hearing difficulties, stress syndrome, chronic fatigue, diarrhea, constipation, and disorders of the liver (Kaphle, Wu, Yang & Lin, 2006).

I use these mushroom formulas to promote the functions of the immune system. The human immune system is a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together as well as independently to defend the body against illness caused by microbes, bacteria, parasites, and fungi that cause infection (NISD, 2012). A strong immune system promotes quick cell development and regeneration. Only through swift regeneration can damaged cells be replaced with healthy, fully functioning, proper operating cells (NISD, 2012).