



# HEALTH wise

FEB 2011

## Remembering the Kindness

This year's Random Acts of Kindness event was celebrated on campus February 11. Over 550 truffles were delivered to recipients who may not have realized their own acts of kindness were appreciated in ways they never expected.

### *"It is in the giving we receive"*

by **Teddy Amolozo**

I was standing outside Shirk Center on a frigid Friday waiting for the LEX bus to pick me up. Not having taken the LEX before, I was unsure where to wait—so I waited on the steps at the entrance to Shirk. With no bus in sight, I was starting to get worried. To complicate the matter, my cell phone battery was dead, so I had no way to call the bus company. About that time, I saw Dennie Bridges coming back to Shirk and we exchanged pleasantries. He asked why I was waiting in the cold, and I explained that I was waiting for the LEX, and that it seemed past time for pick-up. Dennie, also unsure where the bus picked up, suggested we check the Shirk parking lot. He picked up my luggage and carried it to the lot. There was still no bus, so we went into Shirk and Dennie proceeded to call LEX to find out where the passenger pick-up was. We went back to the front of Shirk, again Dennie carrying my luggage. The bus was running very late. He called LEX a couple more times just to make certain there was indeed a bus coming. Dennie waited with me a good half-hour. He did not leave until I was on the bus, and again offered to carry my luggage to the for me. He did not have to do all of this, calling LEX would have been help enough. I could have just waited for the bus myself, but Dennie took the time out of his busy schedule to wait with me to ensure I got my ride to Chicago. What a wonderful act of kindness! Thank you Dennie, I really appreciated what you did!

[www.iwu.edu/~wellness](http://www.iwu.edu/~wellness)

## Feeling Like a Tortoise When You Use to be a Hare?

### Thyroid Trouble may be Lurking

Are you fatigued, chilly, and depressed, inexplicably gaining weight, or suffering from dry skin, thinning hair, brittle nails, constipation or assorted aches and pains? Having trouble getting or staying pregnant? Some or all of these symptoms may be caused by an underactive thyroid gland, meaning you may be deficient in thyroid hormone or hypothyroid.

Your thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of your neck. This gland has an enormous impact on your health, affecting all aspects of your metabolism. It is estimated that more than 12 million American adults have been diagnosed with thyroid disease, and nearly 10 million of those are hypothyroid. Many experts believe the actual rates are considerably higher, and the numbers keep growing. The majority of people affected are women (approximately 80 percent), with the risk increasing during pregnancy and with age.

The most common cause of hypothyroidism is Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune disorder. Autoimmune disorders occur when your immune system produces antibodies that attack your own tissues. Sometimes this process involves your thyroid gland. Scientists aren't sure why the body produces antibodies against itself. Some think a virus or bacterium might trigger the response, while others believe a genetic flaw may be involved. Most likely, autoimmune diseases result from more than one factor. But however it happens, these antibodies affect the thyroid's ability to produce hormones. However, there are also many people that simply have a thyroid gland that does not

function optimally, with vague symptoms that often go undiagnosed.

If you suspect you might be hypothyroid, your first step is to get your hormone levels tested properly. The standard diagnostic test is to check your thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) level. If it's above the normal range, it indicates your thyroid gland is not producing enough thyroid hormone and the pituitary gland in your brain is sending the messages to make more. If TSH is low, the reverse is true and you might be hyperthyroid. If you are symptomatic, and your TSH is normal, you may need to ask your doctor for a full thyroid panel: TSH, free circulating T4 (thyroxine), T3 (triiodothyronine) and reverse T3.

If you're diagnosed as hypothyroid, you'll be prescribed medication. The conventional treatment is levothyroxine, a synthetic but bio-identical hormone prescribed under several brand names.

Whether or not you are on medication or are hypothyroid, here are some

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Illinois Wesleyan  
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WELLNESS



# Recipe of the Month

## Manchego & Chocolate Stuffed Piquillo Peppers



Here is a nutrient rich nibble that can contribute to staying healthy this winter. Great for noshing or even a party treat!

12 ounces shredded Manchego cheese	1 teaspoon cumin
2 ounces high-quality organic 70 percent dark chocolate (such as Dagoba)	1 jar of 12 roasted piquillo peppers (can substitute jarred roasted red bell peppers)
coarsely chopped zest of ¼ orange, finely minced	Coarse sea salt to taste
	Slivered almonds for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. In a medium bowl, combine cheese, chocolate, orange zest and cumin. Arrange peppers on a nonstick baking sheet and using a teaspoon, gently stuff cheese mixture into peppers, being careful not to tear their skins.
3. Bake for 3 to 5 minutes, just until peppers are heated through and cheese and chocolate are melting. Transfer to a serving platter; top with coarse sea salt and slivered almonds.

Serves: 12

Source: *Natural Health*, December/January 2011

## HEALTH STUFF & MORE!

A new European study confirms that mom is right: Eating your vegetables is good for you. What sets this study apart is that it also quantifies what you need to ward off dangerous ischaemic heart disease (reduced blood supply to the heart), "the most common form of death in western countries."

Researchers observed 300,000 people for eight years and found that people who eat 8 servings of fruits and vegetables each day decrease their rate of heart disease by 25 percent!

It is remarkably easy to get those servings in your diet. Remember: A serving of fruit is only 3 ounces.

Consider this plan to help your heart:

- Have two servings of fruits for breakfast. (A banana or an orange.)
- Add a cup of diced tomatoes to your salad to make the salad three servings. Now you're up to five.
- Then add two servings of vegetables for lunch and enjoy some fruit for dinner. Bam, you did it.

The study also showed that for every serving over the five a day (<http://www.5aday.gov/>) currently recommended, you enjoy a 5 percent reduction in risk.

The authors point out that a higher fruit and vegetable intake occurs among people with other healthy eating habits and lifestyles, and that these factors could also be associated with the reduction they observed.

Regardless, eat more fruits and vegetables. It cannot hurt and will definitely help.

Study found at: <http://eurheartj.oxfordjournals.org/content/current,Jan.2011>.

## FEELING LIKE A TORTOISE — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

natural remedies and lifestyle changes that can help optimize your thyroid health.

**Check your iodine intake.** The thyroid gland has the body's highest concentration of iodine. When you're lacking iodine, the gland can malfunction, leading to either hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, in some cases even cancer. The recommended iodine intake for adults is 150 micrograms daily, but consumption has fallen over the past 30 years, partly because so many people have cut back on salt (half a teaspoon of iodized or sea salt provides 65 micrograms). Kelp (seaweed) is a great source of iodine, as is salt-water fish like cod, haddock and perch. You can supplement, but you might want to get your levels checked first, as too much iodine is as problematic as too little.

**Ban Bromine.** During the 1980's bromine was added as a dough enhancer to bread. Bromine competes with iodine in the body and displaces it. Too much bromine can cause goitres. If reserves are already low, eating this bread can create an iodine deficiency. Prior to using bromine in the bread industry, iodine was used as a dough enhancer and helped to prevent rather than contribute to hypothyroidism. Stick to sprouted wheat-free brands or bake your own. Try Ezekiel or Manna breads and for home baking try King Arthur flour. In addition, avoid foods containing brominated vegetable oils, which are also often found in citrus-flavored soft drinks. Methyl bromide is a pesticide that is mainly used on strawberries, so wash them well or buy organic varieties.

**Seek Selenium.** Deficiency of this mineral, though rare in the U.S., can contribute to hypothyroidism. The recommended dietary allowance for adults is 55 micrograms daily (400 micrograms is the recommended upper limit). Brazil nuts are unusually high in selenium, providing 544 micrograms per ounce. Tuna, cod and light meat turkey are good sources as well.

Hypothyroidism can be managed with a variety of tools in your arsenal. Medication, diet, exercise, stress management, and reduced exposure to chemicals such as bromine, all play a part in thyroid health. While this article is just an overview of hypothyroidism, and some suggestions for prevention and promotion of thyroid health, it is not exhaustive in understanding all that contributes to this condition. Listen to your body, if you are feeling out of balance, consider having your thyroid checked to see if it might be contributing to this feeling. In the meantime, have a few Brazil nuts!

Resources:

<http://www.thirdage.com/weight-loss/overlooked-underdiagnosed-thyroid-disease-poses-a-challenge#ixzz1CvEumVzN>  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hypothyroidism/DS00353/DSECTION=causes>  
<http://authorpoppet.wordpress.com/health-articles-recipes/help-yourself-to-a-happy-thyroid-sue/>  
*Natural Health*, December/January 2011

# Mushrooms Pack a Nutritional Punch

By Laurine Brown

A carton of button mushrooms tucked inside my fridge is quickly disappearing. Intended for the soup, which hasn't yet materialized, I find myself eager to snack on them, just as is. Their smooth, cool texture satisfies my urge to munch and they happily quiet my growling stomach.

As I munch, I think about the mystery and magic that surrounds mushrooms. Belonging to the kingdom of fungi, they are neither a plant or animal (but, for simplicity on our food charts we tack them to our vegetable or herb box.) Their small umbrella shape stirs childhood fantasies of jumping into miniature worlds and sliding down the rabbit hole where we learn of their potential powers (poisonous or other). Indeed, Alice in Wonderland shrinks and grows with the mushroom potion, a storyline probably borne out of author Lewis Carroll's own experimentation with the hallucinogenic mushroom, *Amanita muscaria* known to warp time and size perception. Aside from the hallucinogenic and deadly varieties, there are some 3,000 mushroom types known to be edible. This bounty may surprise most Americans who are mainly familiar with the popular white button-tops loved for their mild flavor and texture on pizza, salads, burgers and more. Many Americans are also in the dark about the nutritional (and medicinal) punch that these pale fungi pack, equally that of the brightly colored and exotic fruits and veggies that shine in the media spotlight. Here are some of the hidden nutritional treasures in mushrooms.

## Health benefits

Naturally **low in calories** and **fat**, mushrooms pack less than 25 calories for a 3 ounce serving. They are **low in sodium**, plus their meaty savoriness (called *umami* in Japanese) counterbalances saltiness and allows up to a 50 percent salt reduction without compromising flavor. The nutrients they *contain* are even more interesting — many linked to antioxidant effects, anti cancer activity, immune enhancing benefits and even blood pressure control. Mushrooms provide **B vitamins**, including **riboflavin**, **niacin**, and **pantothenic acid**, which help provide energy by breaking down proteins, fats and carbohydrates. They are a leading source of antioxidants **selenium** and **ergothioneine** which helps strengthen the immune system and protect body cells from damage that may add to chronic disease. They are higher in **potassium**, (which helps control blood pressure), than bananas for a 100g serving. Mushroom **beta-glucans** (natural sugar molecules) have been given attention for their potential benefits with weight management and satiety, cholesterol lowering and blood sugar control. Mushrooms are already used widely as adjuvant therapy for cancer in Japan and China, and studies are currently ongoing in the U.S. on their role in stunting hormonally-dependent breast and prostate cancer growth. Finally, some mushrooms (which are exposed to sunlight) are an unlikely source of **vitamin D**, a nutrient rarely found naturally in food which is linked to healthy bones, teeth, muscles, cancer prevention, autoimmune disease protection, immune defense and mental health. No wonder ancient traditions, especially in Asia, have treasured mushrooms for thousands of years for their health and medicinal benefits.

## Ideas for Dishing up Mushrooms

It makes nutritional sense to add mushrooms to your plate. Varieties listed in the box describe several types of edible mushrooms,

both wild and cultivated. (Note: Some health experts like Andrew Weil, MD, caution against consuming some of the cultivated varieties often — e.g. white button, crimini, portabella — especially in the raw form because they may contain small amounts of toxins, but cooking helps break these down.)

The Mushroom Council offers the following tips:

- Slice and sauté white button mushrooms to top a pizza, toss in pasta or wrap in a quesadilla.
- Combine earthy flavored and hearty-textured brown (crimini) mushrooms with beef, poultry or vegetable dishes.
- Marinade and grill meaty Portabellas and serve on a bun for a great-tasting veggie burger.
- Jazz up sandwiches or soups with enoki mushrooms for added crunch and eye appeal.
- Add taste to pasta, steak, pork or chicken with oyster mushrooms.
- Round out the richness of a main dish or side dish meal with maitakes, which have a unique aroma and woody flavor.
- Enjoy the richness and texture of heated shiitakes in vegetable dishes as well as meat-based dishes
- For preparation and storing tips, recipes and more, see the Mushroom Council @ <http://mushroominfo.com/>.



## MUSHROOMS PICKS

**White (or button)** — Most popular type in the U.S. Mild flavor that blends well with many foods, and intensifies with cooking. Sauté as a side dish, on pizza, pasta, burgers, soups, casseroles or enjoy raw in salad.

**Crimini** — Baby portabella which looks like the button mushroom, but has a tan cap and deeper flavor. Slice in stews, soup, pastas, stuffing, quesadillas, omelets and risottos.

**Portabella** — Large relative of crimini, these have a deep meaty flavor and texture which makes them a great vegetarian meat alternative. Grill, broil or roast them.

**Oyster** — Can be gray, yellow, or even blue and have a delicate flavor. Sauté with a small amount of butter and onions to bring out the flavor, or slice into pasta soups, and salads.

**Enoki** — Long slender stems with tiny button-caps, these are mild tasting and crunchy. Try them raw in salads and sandwiches, add to soups, or stir fry briefly with soy sauce, tofu and vegetables.

**Shiitake** — Tan-to-dark brown with umbrella-shaped caps and tough curved stems (remove before cooking). Available fresh or dried in Asian grocery stores. Best when cooked for a rich, flavorful, woody taste. Add a meaty flavor and texture to stir-fry, pastas, and soups.

**Maitake** — Rippling and fan-shaped Japanese mushroom without caps. Often called "Hen of the Woods" because it grows in clusters that resemble fluffed tail feathers of a nesting hen. Available dried or fresh in Asian grocery stores, gourmet food stores. Rich, woody taste, meaty texture. Sauté as side dish or add to soups, entrees, grain dishes.

Resources available at [www.iwu.edu/~wellness](http://www.iwu.edu/~wellness)

# WELLNESS TIDBITS



*Creating Healthy Communities*

## The Expo's FREE-4-All

**Don't throw it away! Give it away!**

In the tradition of Ecology Action Center's semi-annual FREE-4-ALL, we will be creating an opportunity to give away your unwanted stuff and to take what you like — FOR FREE! Last year's FREE-4-ALL was a big success. So let's do it again! Here are the rules:

### **FREE-4-ALL Household Items Giveaway**

Please Bring:

- Knick-knacks, lamps, vases, paintings, prints etc. Items must be clean and in good condition.
- No large furniture

### **Men & Women's Clothing**

*This year we are going to attempt giving away gently used clothing.*

- Adult men & women's clothing only.
- Clothes must be clean and in good shape.

### **And for the Kids! FREE-4-ALL Toy Giveaway!**

Bring in your gently used toys to give away to others!

- Toys must be in good shape (all parts and pieces etc.) and clean.

***Please bring household items, adult clothing and/or toys that deserve a second life to the IWU Wellness Office by April 1. Please contact us with questions or if you need help with pick-up, x3334 or [wellness@iwu.edu](mailto:wellness@iwu.edu).***

**Donated items will be available at the Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., at the Shirk Center For more information about the Expo go to: [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org)**