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## **MUSHROOMS MAY OFFER NATURAL SOLUTION FOR VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY** *Preliminary Research Shows That Light Enhanced Mushrooms May Provide up to 100% of the Daily Value for Vitamin D*

SAN JOSE, Calif. (February 13, 2008) – Only 10 percent of Americans currently have optimal blood levels of vitamin D, according to a new study in the journal of the *American Heart Association* – alarming news as deficiency in this essential vitamin may result in weak bones and an increased risk of heart disease.

Preliminary research suggests that the ultraviolet light found in sunlight may boost levels of vitamin D in mushrooms. The natural process of “enriching” mushrooms by briefly exposing mushrooms grown in the dark to light for 5 minutes may boost existing vitamin D levels from 15 IU (4 percent of Daily Value) to as much as 100 percent of the Daily Value (400 IU). Currently, the industry is investigating ways to make mushrooms enriched with vitamin D through light enhancement commercially available. For more information on this research, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/36yape> .\*

“Mushrooms are the only natural fresh vegetable or fruit that contains vitamin D. Mushrooms contain ergosterol – a plant sterol – that is converted to vitamin D when exposed to the right amount of sunlight,” says Mona S. Calvo, Ph.D. Nutritionist, Expert Regulatory Review Scientist at the Food and Drug Administration, Center for Safety and Applied Nutrition. “In simple terms, this ‘sun-blushing’ process allows mushrooms to provide vitamin D.”

### **The Vitamin D Download**

The main source of vitamin D for individuals comes from sun exposure, which is a challenge for those in colder winter climates, people with dark skin, the elderly, and those who wear sunscreen. Another source of vitamin D is food, such as fish or fortified milk, which some experts recommend over supplements.

Vitamin D promotes the absorption of calcium, which is essential for healthy teeth and bones. Evidence suggests the vitamin is associated with a reduced risk of several other chronic diseases, such as heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes, according to preliminary studies. It may also help support a healthy immune system and be associated with lower risks for colorectal cancer and possibly other cancers, including prostate, breast and lung cancer.

### **Healthy, D-licious Recipes**

Adding mushrooms enriched with vitamin D through light enhancement to everyday meals may be an easy and tasty way to increase your vitamin D intake and mushrooms are available year-round. Simply try **Mushroom, Salmon and Edamame Penne** and **Mushroom Veggie Frittata** to add vitamin D and other nutrients to your diet. For these recipes and information about the health benefits of nature’s hidden treasure, visit [mushroominfo.com](http://mushroominfo.com).

\* tinyurl.com converts long links into shorter links that are easy to type. Enter the tinyurl.com link in your browser to be directed to the host site.

The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve. For more information on the Mushroom Council, visit [mushroomcouncil.org](http://mushroomcouncil.org).

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