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Food safety tips for mushrooms

Mushrooms are part of a [healthy eating pattern](#) and provide many nutrients that your body needs.

Mushrooms are the fleshy part of a fungus and usually grow on composted materials and nutrient sources such as tree logs. There are many types of edible mushrooms, including white button mushrooms, portabella mushrooms, and shiitake mushrooms.

By making sure they are properly handled, washed, prepared, and stored, you can enjoy the health benefits of mushrooms and help prevent food poisoning for yourself and your family.



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Mushrooms and food poisoning

Eating mushrooms that have been contaminated with harmful bacteria can make you sick.

While fresh mushrooms do not naturally contain bacteria that can make you ill, they can become contaminated if they are grown on compost that has not been properly sterilized.

Mushrooms can also become contaminated by:

- contaminated water
- animals
- improperly composted manure

They can also be contaminated by bacteria:

- during and after harvest from handling, storing, and transporting
- at the grocery store, in the refrigerator, or from counters and cutting boards (through cross-contamination with harmful bacteria from raw meat, poultry, or seafood)

Mushrooms and botulism

The conditions in which mushrooms are packaged and stored can also contribute to the growth of harmful bacteria. Storing fresh mushrooms unrefrigerated in an airtight container may promote the growth of harmful bacteria that could cause botulism. Prevent botulism by refrigerating mushrooms in a paper bag or in their original packaging (if prepackaged).

Did you know?

Every year, more than 4 million Canadians get food poisoning. Many of these illnesses could be prevented by following proper food handling and preparation techniques.

Shopping

- Choose mushrooms that are fresh and firm. Avoid mushrooms that are bruised or show signs of spoilage.
- Choose prepackaged, fresh mushrooms covered in plastic wrapping or film that has holes in it. This will allow air to flow through the container and prevent the growth of harmful bacteria that could cause botulism.

Chilling/storing

Fresh mushrooms should be eaten as soon as possible.

- Loose mushrooms should be stored in a paper bag in the refrigerator.
- Prepackaged mushrooms can be refrigerated in their original packaging or in a paper bag for up to five days.
- Mushrooms can be frozen, but only if they are steamed or sautéed first. These cooked mushrooms can be kept in the freezer for eight to 12 months.

Cleaning

Washing your hands and following proper cleaning techniques can help you avoid cross-contamination and prevent the spread of food poisoning.

- Use warm water and soap to thoroughly wash all utensils, countertops, and cutting boards before and after handling mushrooms.

Preparing

Wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, before and after handling mushrooms.

- Throw out any mushrooms that are bruised or spoiled.
- Mushrooms can be cleaned gently with a damp cloth or a soft bristle mushroom brush.

- Mushrooms can also be rinsed under fresh, cool running water and patted dry with paper towel. There is no need to use anything other than water to wash mushrooms. Washing them gently with water is as effective as using produce cleansers.
- Spend extra time cleaning the underside of the mushroom. The flesh under the mushroom cap can store bacteria and viruses.
- For quality reasons, do not wash mushrooms until you are ready to use them.

What the Government of Canada does to protect you

The Government of Canada is committed to food safety.

Together with industry, we work to identify best practices that can be used to help prevent contamination of fresh produce throughout the food system, from the field to the store. In addition, inspection and enforcement activities conducted by the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#) work to ensure that steps taken by producers, manufacturers, and importers have been effective and that the foods available to Canadians are safe.

For more information

- [Food recalls and advisories](#)
- [Report product-related health and safety concerns](#)
- [Be Food Safe](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)

[For industry and professionals](#)

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