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Shiitake Mushroom Extract as a Cholesterol Regulator by [Mack Shepperson](#)

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Shiitake mushrooms have been used as medicine for thousands of years. The mushroom is native to Asia, which includes countries like China, Korea, and Japan. These mushrooms are mainly used to boost the immune system, due to an active compound in the mushroom called lentinan. The mushroom also contains eritadenine, which regulates cholesterol levels in the body.

The word "cholesterol" often has a negative connotation. It has been associated with clogged arteries and heart disease. Actually, cholesterol is a naturally occurring substance in the body, being a component of human cell membranes. Cholesterol is crucial to the manufacture of substances like vitamin D, steroid hormones, and bile acids.

Food with animal fat contains cholesterol. These include, but are not limited to, poultry, beef, pork, fish, cheese, and eggs. Even the human breast contains large amounts of cholesterol. Plants contain cholesterol, too, though they are more of the "good" kind, like sitosterol.

Because cholesterol has the potential to benefit and harm the human body at the same time, cholesterol was divided into "good" and "bad" cholesterol. "Good" cholesterol is called HDL (high-density lipoprotein), which carries 30 percent of blood cholesterol in healthy individuals. Low-density protein (LDL), also known as "bad" cholesterol, causes the clogging of artery walls. When our arteries are clogged, the heart is forced to pump harder to give blood and oxygen to other organs, which may lead to heart failure.

As mentioned earlier, the shiitake mushroom extract contains eritadenine. Eritadenine is also called lentinacin or lentsine. This substance comes from adenine, one of the building blocks of the shiitake mushroom's DNA. A study conducted on Japanese men showed that when these men consumed four ounces of fresh shiitake or two ounces of dried shiitake, their cholesterol level dropped by 10 percent in one week.

The beta glucan found in the shiitake mushroom extract also contributes to the mushroom's ability to regulate cholesterol. Like eritadenine, beta glucan improves HDL levels while simultaneously decreasing LDL levels. Beta glucan is also actively responsible for the shiitake mushroom's ability to strengthen the immune system as beta glucans can stimulate the release of NK-Cells and macrophage immune cells.

The shiitake mushroom extract has other benefits, such as the prevention of cancer and thrombosis, weight reduction, and nutrition. Shiitake mushrooms contain vitamins like B1, B2, B3, B5, and D, and minerals like iron and sodium. You can read methods of preparing shiitake mushrooms at ehow.com/how_2238440_lower-cholesterol-shiitake-mushroom.html.

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