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NATIONAL NUTRIENT DATABASE UPDATED TO INCLUDE VITAMIN D VALUES *202 new foods added this year including restaurant foods and Latino cuisine*

SAN JOSE, Calif. (October 8, 2009) – The next time you run nutritionals using the government's database, you might be pleasantly surprised that some of your favorite foods seem to have received a nutrient boost, virtually overnight.

The addition of vitamin D values to nearly half of all food entries – including mushrooms, the only fruit or vegetable with natural vitamin D – topped the list of important updates made to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) release 22 of the National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference. The database is available for anyone to search or download from the Nutrient Data Laboratory Web site and can be found here: www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata.

The database – which contains nutrient data for over 7,500 food items for up to 143 food components, such as vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and fatty acids – is the foundation of most food and nutrition databases in the U.S., used for determining the nutritional components of recipes, along with serving as a resource in food policy and research.

“Nutrition and health professionals regard the database as the authoritative source of information about food composition in the United States,” said Mary Jo Feeney, Fellow of the American Dietetic Association and nutrition research coordinator for the Mushroom Council. There is a substantial amount of research and public health interest in the role of vitamin D in health. The inclusion of vitamin D values for mushrooms in the database enables health professionals to assess consumers' intake of vitamin D and use mushrooms to help meet their dietary needs.”

Similar to the way that humans absorb sunlight and convert it to vitamin D, mushrooms contain a plant sterol—ergosterol—that converts to vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. The top three selling mushroom varieties (button, crimini and portabella) have vitamin D ranging from 1 to 97 percent of the Daily Value (400 IU) per raw 84 gram serving.

The Vitamin D Download

Interest in vitamin D, also called the “sunshine vitamin” has exploded in the past year, making D the new hot nutrient among consumers and health professionals alike.

- This year, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) convened a committee on calcium and vitamin D to determine if the current intake recommendations should be increased for all Americans. The report is expected in 2010.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics doubled the amount of vitamin D it recommends for children and infants.
- An emerging body of science, including laboratory, animal and epidemiological studies, suggests that higher intakes of vitamin D may be protective against some cancers, including pancreatic, breast, colon and colorectal cancers.^{1 2 3 4}

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¹ Skinner HG, Michaud DS, Giovannucci E, Willett WC, et al. Vitamin D intake and the risk for pancreatic cancer in two cohort studies. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 2006;15(9):1688-1695.

² Giovannucci E, Liu Y, Rimm EB, Hollis BW, et al. Prospective study of predictors of vitamin D status and cancer incidence and mortality in men. *J Natl Cancer Inst.* 2006;98:451-9.

³ Spina CS, et al. Vitamin D and cancer. *Anticancer Res.* 2006;26(4A):2515-24.

⁴ Palmieri C, MacGregor T, Girgis S, Vigushin D. Serum 25 hydroxyvitamin D levels in early and advanced breast cancer. *J Clin Pathol.* 2006; online edition: <http://jcp.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/59/12/1334>

- Scientists are also exploring links between low vitamin D status and increased risk for a number of chronic diseases, including heart disease, type 1 diabetes, and multiple sclerosis.^{5 6 7}
- Influential scientists and researchers have gathered this week in Belgium to further explore vitamin D and its importance in health at the Vitamin D Workshop, hosted every three years by the University of California-Riverside.

Plantains, Gold Kiwifruit and Energy Drinks

Some other interesting facts about the database and the newly added foods and beverages:

- The muscadine grape – which is a new addition to the database – is considered “America’s First Grape,” according to the USDA Agriculture Research Service. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of their abundance when he landed on the coast of North Carolina in 1584.
- Plantains are also referred to as “cooking bananas” and are often used in Latino cooking which is why they were recently added to the database. In many countries, this fruit is used more like a vegetable or for cooking rather than being eaten like a fruit. It is starchier in flavor and is not suitable for eating unless very ripe, when the peel turns completely black.
- Other Latino foods added include tostada shells, sweetened Latino breads, cakes, cookies, muffins, horchata beverage and dulce de leche.
- Horchata is a popular, usually “milky,” Latino beverage made of ground sesame seeds, almonds, rice, barley or tigernuts, sugar and spices. There are now two entries of this sweet drink in the database.
- One cup of the gold kiwifruit – another new addition – has approximately 100 mg more vitamin C than one cup of a fresh, navel orange.
- There are now 10 entries for “energy drink.”
- The database now includes 13 “formulated bars,” which includes popular brands of bars fortified with various nutrients such as protein and fiber.

For more information on mushrooms and vitamin D, visit www.MushroomInfo.com.

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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.

⁵ Zitterman A, Koerfer R. Vitamin D in the prevention and treatment of coronary heart disease. *Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care*. 2008 Nov;11(6):752-7.

⁶ Bailey R, et al. Association of the vitamin D metabolism gene CYP27B1 with type 1 diabetes. *Diabetes*, 2007 Oct;56(10):2616-21. Epub 2007 Jul 2.

⁷ Munger KL, et al. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels and risk of multiple sclerosis. *JAMA*, 2006 Dec 20;296(23):2832-8.