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## Harvest of the Month | Fact Sheet

# Mushrooms

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**T**here are three parts to a mushroom – a cap, gills, and a stem. Mushrooms come in thousands of different varieties. Some of the most common are button, cremini, shiitake, oyster, and portabella. Mushrooms are grown in sterile environments in “growing houses.” They also grow in the wild. Some wild mushrooms are toxic so it’s best to purchase mushrooms commercially rather than to pick your own.



### Did you know?

-  Pennsylvania leads the US in mushroom production with more than 50 farms growing nearly 557 million pounds of mushrooms each year.
-  Mushrooms are made up of 90% water.
-  While commonly placed in the vegetable category, mushrooms are technically not vegetables or fruits. They are considered a fungus.
-  Unlike plants, mushrooms do not need light to grow.

### Selection

Most of the tops (caps) of the mushrooms should be closed around the stem or moderately open with pink or light tan gills. The surface of the cap should be white or creamy or a uniform light brown. Avoid mushrooms with wide-open or pitted or discolored caps, and dark, discolored gills. Mushrooms should be firm and the surfaces should be dry.

### Storage

Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the refrigerator for up to three days. Do not store in a plastic bag as it can trap moisture and promote spoilage. Do not wash the mushrooms before storing them. Fresh mushrooms should never be frozen. Sautéed mushrooms can be frozen for up to one month.

### Nutrition

Mushrooms are low in sodium, fat, and calories and high in B vitamins such as riboflavin and niacin. Riboflavin plays a role in making energy from foods. Niacin is involved with the body’s digestive system, skin, and nerves.

### Handling

Limit contact with water when cleaning mushrooms as they will soak up the water which could cause the flavor to change. Wipe with a dry paper towel or damp sponge or cloth. If the mushrooms have soil on the stems, trim off the soiled portion. For shiitake mushrooms, stems should be removed before use.

Dried mushrooms need to be re-hydrated prior to use unless they’re being used in soups. To re-hydrate, place mushrooms in a small amount of hot water or broth for 30 minutes prior to use in recipes.

(The [Mushroom Council’s website](#) includes videos on selecting, storing, and handling mushrooms.)



## School Meal Connection

Mushrooms classified as an “other” vegetable in the school lunch and breakfast meal pattern.

## Harvest Season

Mushrooms are harvested year-long in Pennsylvania.

## Finding Mushrooms

Child Nutrition Program operators may be able to find local mushrooms in a variety of ways. Check with your produce distributor to learn what they have available. You can search for products through the PA Preferred website or connect with local producers through produce auctions or farmer’s markets. The Food Trust has also developed a Guide to Local Produce in Keystone Schools which identifies producers who are interested in selling to schools.

## Preparation

Mushrooms can be eaten raw or cooked. Consider adding mushrooms to salads, pasta dishes, and soups, or use as a topping on pizza, burgers, and sandwiches. Mushrooms can also be used as a meat extender. For example, chopped mushrooms blend well with ground meats so they can be used to replace some of the ground meat in items such as sloppy joes or tacos.



**Sautéed/Stir-fried:** Put a small amount of oil or broth in a pan. Place mushrooms in the pan and cook, uncovered, over medium to medium-high heat for three to five minutes. Add additional liquid if mushrooms begin to stick to the pan.



**Broil:** Brush mushrooms lightly with oil. Place mushrooms stem-side down on a pan. Broil for five minutes, turning the mushrooms and brushing them again halfway through the cooking time.



**Bake:** Pre-heat oven to 375°F. Arrange mushrooms in a single layer on a baking pan. Brush lightly with oil. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes.



## Recipe | Peppy Pasta Salad

100 serving. Serving Size: 1 cup.

**Credits:** 1 cup serving provides 1 oz eq WGR grain, ¼ cup dark green vegetable, ⅓ cup red/orange vegetable, and ⅓ cup additional vegetable.

Ingredients	Measure	Directions
Whole grain rich rotini	6 lb + 4 oz	1. Cook pasta according to directions, reducing cooking time by one minute. 2. Cool pasta immediately.
Tap water	9 lb + 4 oz	
Broccoli florets	14 lb	3. Steam broccoli for 12 minutes or until broccoli is bright green and still crisp. 4. Cool broccoli immediately in an ice bath.
Mushrooms, diced, frozen	4 lb + 2 oz	
Fresh diced tomatoes	8 lb + 12 oz	5. Place mushrooms on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Roast in a 400°F pre-heated convection oven for 15 minutes. Pull mushrooms out and toss to mix mushrooms. Place back in oven for an additional 15 minutes. Pull from oven and let rest at room temperature for 15 minutes. Drain well and add to pasta. 6. Add diced tomatoes and basil to the pasta mix. Add cooled broccoli florets to the pasta mixture. Fold all together without mashing the pasta. Add salad dressing and fold into pasta mixture.
Italian salad dressing	3 qt + ½ cup	
Crushed red pepper flakes	½ cup	
Fresh basil	1 cup chopped	
		7. Refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to mingle and merge.

Source: [Mushrooms in Schools](#). The Mushroom Council.



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website ([www.paharvestofthemonth.org](http://www.paharvestofthemonth.org)) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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