

## Cancer-fighting mushrooms? Insect-eating cordyceps fungi could help produce new antiviral and cancer drugs

Researchers [grew cordyceps mushrooms on six different kinds of insects](#).

They found that mushrooms grown amid high levels of oleic fatty acid contained the most cordycepin, a potential therapeutic agent with antiviral and anticancer properties.

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Some studies have shown that cordyceps can [increase](#) antioxidant levels in older mice and may have anti-aging [effects](#). Another [study](#) noted that cordyceps might extend the lives of fruit flies.

Studies of human cells and mice have found that the mushroom may also [inhibit](#) cancer tumor growth and have applications in conditions including [lung cancer](#), [skin cancer](#), and [colon cancer](#).

Preliminary studies also suggest that the mushroom may benefit [heart health](#) and help manage blood sugar levels in [type 2 diabetes](#).

While promising, most research into cordyceps has been conducted in cell or animal models and further study is needed to confirm whether the results may translate to humans.

"Cordyceps is a unique type of mushroom," [Shiuan Chen](#), Ph.D., chair of the Department of Cancer Biology and Molecular Medicine at California-based cancer research center, City of Hope, not involved in the study, told *MNT*:

The therapeutic potential of these mushrooms has not been definitively demonstrated through an FDA-approved clinical trial. Increased production of cordyceps may offer the possibility to evaluate them in a clinical trial, which would require a good amount of this type of mushroom.

Dr. Chen noted that while cordycepin may be useful in humans, human trials must be conducted for conclusions to be made.

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