



SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Mushroom Safety

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Contact WAPC at mryuk@wapc.org with questions

Opportunities for gathering and consuming mushrooms in the Pacific Northwest are abundant, and many mushrooms are considered delicacies – but **some mushrooms are poisonous and can be deadly**. Before venturing out to mushroom forage, it's important to keep yourself safe by learning about mushroom safety. Here are some tips from the Washington Poison Center and Puget Sound Mycological Society:

In order to be edible, mushrooms must be:

1. **Identified with certainty** – there is no shortcut. The name of the mushroom must be known. *Even the experts get fooled.*
2. **Tolerated by most people** – a good field guide passes on the experience of people who have eaten a particular species.
3. **Found in a wholesome environment** – mushrooms can absorb herbicides and heavy metals. Where mushrooms are found is important to your overall health.
4. **Fresh** – rotten or damaged mushrooms are never edible.
5. **Cooked** – heat softens indigestible mushrooms. It may vaporize some poisons and reduce the potency in others.
6. **Eaten in reasonable quantities** – some mushrooms are safe to eat in small portions but troublesome when overeaten.
7. **Eaten by healthy adults** – children, older adults, and people who are already ill may be sickened by mushrooms that are edible by others.

Symptoms of mushroom poisoning include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- In severe cases, seizures, kidney and liver failure

To learn more about mushroom identification:

The Puget Sound Mycological Society offers the Hildegard Hendrickson Identification Clinic on Mondays, from 4 pm to 7 pm, Glass Atrium at the Center for Urban Horticulture, University of Washington, 3501 NE 41st Street (Mary Gates Drive), Seattle, WA 98105. Learn more at, www.psms.org.

Call 911

If you, or another person, have ingested a poisonous mushroom and are experiencing difficulty breathing, face swelling, or loss of consciousness.



The Washington Poison Center is always here to help, 24/7/365.
Call 1(800) 222-1222 for free, confidential, and expert poison information.
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