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Coriolus versicolor (mushroom)

Caution: Some complementary agents or therapies may be useful for cancer patients; however, some may be harmful in certain situations. M. D. Anderson Cancer Center cautions patients to consult with their oncologist before attempting to use the agents or therapies described on these pages. Inclusion of an agent, therapy or resource on this CIMER Web site does not imply endorsement by M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

- Review is based upon articles published as of 2/28/2005
- More in-depth information on *Coriolus versicolor* and polysaccharide K is provided in the [Detailed Scientific Review](#)

Description



Mushrooms have traditionally been valued in Asia for their nutritional and medicinal qualities. The *Coriolus versicolor* or "Turkey Tail" mushroom has been investigated in numerous laboratory, animal and human clinical studies. Most of these studies have demonstrated that it does appear to have significant antimicrobial, antiviral and antitumor properties when used as a supplement to chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy. Human trials have included randomization, a process that decreases bias, but only one has used blinding, which would make them even more protected against biases.

The anti-cancer and immune stimulating properties of *Coriolus versicolor* have been attributed to two extracts from its cultured mycelium (thread-like extensions). These extracts are both protein-bound polysaccharides known as polysaccharide K (PSK) and polysaccharide-peptide (PSP). Hot water is required to extract these active components.

Dose

An oral dose of three grams per day has been established in human trials, with duration of intake ranging from 28 days to three years.

How it is taken

Coriolus versicolor extracts can be taken orally as a tea or in capsules or pills. It has also been injected in some animal studies.

Side effects

Although side effects are uncommon, some patients have reported stomach or intestinal upset. No genetic damage has been reported from the Ames test.

Possible risks

There are no known risks associated with *Coriolus versicolor* use; however, no one should attempt to identify this mushroom on their own because of the danger of choosing a poisonous variety. The Food and Drug Administration does not currently allow the importing of this mushroom or its extracts into the U. S. However, this mushroom is grown and its extracts produced within the U. S.

Important Advice

To avoid potential interactions, be sure to let your health care provider know if you use this or any other type of complementary therapy.

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