

Fungi

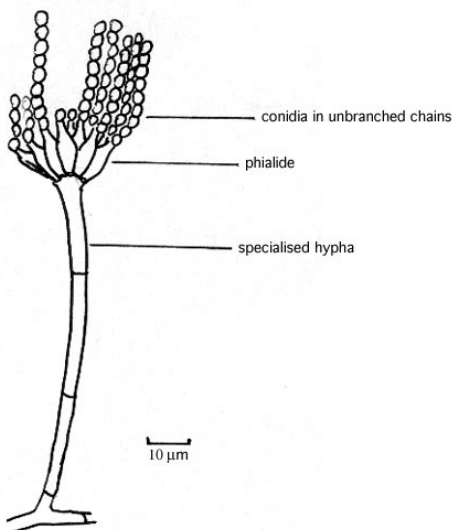
Created: Thursday, 28 July 2011 09:40 | Published: Thursday, 28 July 2011 09:40 | Written by [Super User](#) | [Print](#)

What are Fungi?



[Molds](#), yeasts, mildews, mushrooms and rusts are all examples of fungi. Fungi together with

bacteria are master decomposers of the biosphere. They secrete enzymes that digest food outside their body and then absorb the broken down products. Without [fungi](#) communities would become buried in their own waste, nutrients could not be recycled and life could not go on. Fungi are heterotrophs meaning they feed on other organisms, dead or alive.



Most are saprophytes: they feed on dead and decaying matter. Examples include molds such as Penicillium from which we get antibiotics. Parasites feed on living organism, causing them harm. Examples include: wheat rust and athletes' foot.

The fungal body consists of mycelia that consist of fine colorless branching threads called [hyphae](#).

A hyphae outer wall is mainly made of chitin which is normally found in insect skeletons. Often hyphae are in separate cells—their cytoplasm interconnects, so that nutrients flow easily throughout the [mycelia](#).

Fungi Reproduction

Fungi reproduce mainly by asexual reproduction by producing spores which are dispersed by wind. Under suitable condition each spore grows into a tube and develops branching hypha. Hyphae are modified and groups together to form a large reproductive structure in which spores develop. An example of fungi which we can see in our daily life is [mushroom](#).

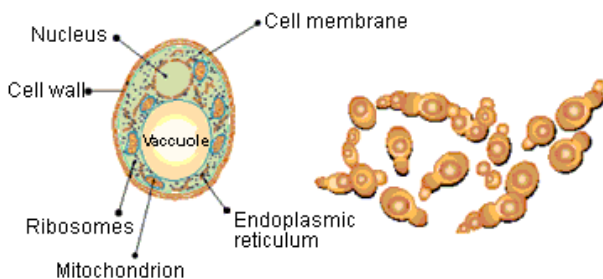
Mushroom:



They are umbrella structures shaped reproductive parts of some fungi. The mycelium grows throughout

the year in the soil or rotting wood. The hypha absorb nutrients and some of them grow upwards, tightly packed and form the mushroom. Millions of black spores are produced in the cap by asexual reproduction. These are released into the air and will germinate under the suitable conditions. Several fungi are very good to eat although some need to be cooked first. If you are considering eating wild mushrooms you must first learn to recognize and identify all you find. This is because several are either deadly poisonous or have unpleasant effects if eaten. The Death Cap Fungus contains toxins that cause liver and kidney failure and, often, death. No antidote exists for its effects. The [Fly Agarics](#) has toxins that attack the central nervous system, acting as a strong hallucinogen.

Yeast:



Yeast are collections of single celled fungi commonly found on the

surface of fruits, flowers and leaves of plants and in the soil on animal feces and in milk. The cell contains many food storage vacuoles which make the cytoplasm appear granular. They are generally saprophytes. They feed on dead matter, releasing enzymes onto the food to digest it and then absorbing the sugars and amino acids produced. Most respire aerobically without oxygen, producing ethanol as a waste product. While technically [ethanol](#) is a waste product we don't consider it waste in beer and wine making or other uses of yeast such as baking and biotechnology such as making ethanol from sugar cane.

Effects and uses of Fungi:

Beneficial effects:

1. Some species of *Penicillium* give flavor to cheese; others make penicillin, a widely used antibiotic.
2. Some species of [Aspergillus](#) make citric acid which is used for manufacture of sweets and soft drinks.
3. Bakers and brewers use yeast to produce CO₂ for raising bread and for making alcohol.

Harmful effects:

1. Molds spoil food in storage.
2. Athlete's foot is caused by fungi that feed on the warm, damp tissue between your toes and turn the skin scaly red and itchy.
3. Fungi attack crops such as corn, wheat and potatoes causing damage each year.

Want to know more about fungi? [Click here](#) to schedule a live help with an eTutor!

About eAge Tutoring:

[eAgeTutor.com](#) is the premium online tutoring provider. Using materials developed by highly qualified educators and leading content developers, a team of top-notch software experts, and a group of passionate educators, eAgeTutor works to ensure the success and satisfaction of all of its students.

[Contact us](#) today to learn more about our guaranteed results and discuss how we can help make the dreams of the student in your

life come true!

Reference Links:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monera>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protist>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protozoa>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fungus>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbiosis>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slime_mold
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvTvaxVySIE>

Category:ROOT

[Joomla SEF URLs by Artio](#)