indigenous bacteria and improve the bacterial flora in the oral cavity. They have also found that, by including such a powder or extract in an oral composition, it is possible to impart an excellent growth promoting effect on non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria and an excellent bacterial flora improving effect, and to maintain a good balance of normal bacterial flora in the oral cavity.

[0011]

It is known that mushrooms and mushroom extracts have antibacterial effects on bacteria that cause oral diseases and also have other effects, such as suppressing dental plaque formation and anti-inflammatory effects, and that including these in an oral composition is effective for suppressing dental caries and periodontal disease (Patent Documents 6 to 9: JP-A 2007-1961, JP-A 2010-77028, JP-A 2004-26701, JP-A 2001-151690). However, in the present invention, dried powders of the subsequently described specific mushrooms, or extracts thereof, were unexpectedly found to not exhibit anti bacterial effects against non-pathogenic indigenous bacteria in the oral cavity, but rather to selectively activate their proliferation and promote growth, a hitherto unknown effect. The inventors discovered from this the suitability for use in a new application; namely, as an agent for promoting the growth of non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria or an agent for improving the bacterial flora in the oral cavity.

In this invention, the proliferation of non-pathogenic indigenous bacteria within the oral cavity, especially Mitis group streptococci selected from among *Streptococcus gordonii*, *Streptococcus mitis* and *Streptococcus oralis*, is specifically activated, promoting their growth and enabling the balance of bacterial flora to be improved. As a result, the balance of normal bacterial flora within the oral cavity is prevented from breaking down due to, for example, a disruption in eating habits, thus maintaining a healthy state. Also, Mitis group streptococci which play a role in suppressing oral diseases increase, inhibiting oral diseases such as dental caries and periodontal disease, and also making it possible to prevent a tendency toward pathogenicity.

Therefore, this invention is able to provide a preparation which is useful as an agent for promoting the growth of non-pathogenic indigenous bacteria in the oral cavity, and which moreover is particularly useful, via selective promotion of the growth of non-pathogenic indigenous bacteria in the oral cavity, as a bacterial flora improving agent that forms bacterial flora composed primarily of non-pathogenic indigenous bacteria.

[0011a]

In one aspect, there is provided the use of a dry powder of one or more mushroom selected from the group consisting of: lion's mane mushroom (*Hericium erinaceus*), hon-shimeji (*Lyophyllum shimeji*), buna-shimeji (*Hypsizygus marmoreus*), oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) and *Agaricus blazei*, for the manufacture of a medicament for preventing oral diseases, wherein said medicament is a growth promoting agent of non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria, and wherein the non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria are selected from the group consisting of *Streptococcus gordonii, Streptococcus mitis* and *Streptococcus oralis*, wherein the content of dry powder is 0.1 to 20% by weight in the overall growth promoting agent.

CLAIMS:

1. Use of a dry powder of one or more mushroom selected from the group consisting of: lion's mane mushroom (*Hericium erinaceus*), hon-shimeji (*Lyophyllum shimeji*), buna-shimeji (*Hypsizygus marmoreus*), oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) and *Agaricus blazei*, for the manufacture of a medicament for preventing oral diseases, wherein said medicament is a growth promoting agent of non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria, and wherein the non-pathogenic indigenous oral bacteria are selected from the group consisting of *Streptococcus gordonii*, *Streptococcus mitis* and *Streptococcus oralis*, wherein the content of dry powder is 0.1 to 20% by weight in the overall growth promoting agent.