

...Did You Know?

Health Benefits of PUMPKINS

By Joanne Rennie



It's that time of year again when the leaves are turning to beautiful hues of orange and fiery red, the birds are flying south and best of all the pumpkin patches have produced their fruits...err...vegetables of labour. Halloween has come and gone and everyone has carved their funny smiling faces. Thanksgiving has also passed and I'm sure everyone thoroughly enjoyed their scrumptious pumpkin desserts. But there's another side to the great pumpkin patch that many of us don't know. That wonderful field of pumpkins you see as you pass by on the highway is packed full of health benefits, nutrients and many treats one wouldn't normally think about, which is so beneficial all year long... after all...pumpkins are so much fun to carve into funny or scary faces for Halloween, it pretty much ends there...Right? Or does it?

Did you know the mighty pumpkin is loaded with vitamin A and antioxidant carotenoids, particularly alpha and beta-carotenes, it's a good source of vitamins C, K, and E, and lots of minerals, including magnesium, potassium, and iron? Pumpkin boosts your immune system as well as keeps

your eyes, bones and teeth healthy and may also play an important role in cancer prevention. For people who are on diets, it's also rich in fiber which helps you eat less, feel fuller AND lose weight.

By adding 1/2 - 1 cup of pumpkin puree into soup, stew, pasta sauce and chili or use it in place of oil in your favorite bread or muffin recipe, you'll add many more nutrients to your meal and the change in flavor is very minimal.

Keep the seeds the next time you carve the great pumpkin and roast them in the oven for about 3-5 minutes with your favorite seasoning and voila, you have a tasty snack loaded with nutritional values that will kick the chips to the curb. The seeds are easy to digest, stabilize blood sugar, are high in the prostate-protecting mineral zinc, rich in Vitamin K and seem to have an anti-inflammatory effect.

Who would have known the pumpkin has so much to offer? No wonder Ole Jack-o'-lantern is smiling! **LH**

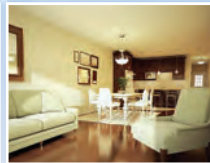


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