

# Pumpkins are good for you

The world today is dying to have the delicious pumpkin we ate in the village for its nutritious, medicinal and health value. By eating well and healthy, you will save incredibly on your health budget not to mention your enjoyment and feeling of well being. The fruit, with edible pulp which is usually yellow or orange when cooked is useful in pies, various pastries and soups. This fruits, high in Vitamins A, C and E with high levels of Potassium iron and B group of vitamins can be baked in an oven until golden brown. It can be eaten with honey or combined with other fruits. After cooking pumpkins, they can be blended with milk or soy and sweetened to taste with honey.

An interesting aspect of the pumpkin is their flowers. The light yellow blossoms are rich in vegetable fibre and small amounts of carbohydrates. They are particularly rich in Beta Carotene (Provitamin A) and other potent antioxidants which perform very important functions in prevention of cancer and arteriosclerosis. A prospective study in 1992 by Hankinson et al showed that, women who frequently ate pumpkins and sweet potatoes did not present cataracts in USA. Vitamin A, C and fibre (vegetable) are three of the most effective proven

anti-carcinogenic vegetable based substances. It is rare to find all three in one food and their presence in pumpkins makes this fruit one of the best dietary components of those at high risk of cancer.

When constipated, the pumpkin has mild laxative effect. It is capable of neutralising excess stomach acidity because of its richness of potassium salts. A diet of pumpkins, potatoes and milk is very useful during an acute phase of a stomach ulcer offering relief before a doctor is sought. The underlying cause of disease needs qualified health personnel's attention. Pumpkins seeds can be eaten raw or lightly toasted. The seeds and their oils are very

## GOOD LIVING

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rich in Vitamin E, Zinc and Iron.

They also contain some alkaloids (chemical substances) which gives them the ability to paralyse worms in the stomach.

Pumpkins despite their low calorific content have the ability to make one feel full. This is due to its high fibre content. This makes it one of the best anti-obesity dietary ingredient.

The lancet recently published a study done by Dr Tina in Rigs hospital of Copenhagen (Denmark) where it was shown that, men who are conscious of their diet and eat ecologically cultivated food produce 43 per cent more spermatozooids than the normal population. Absence of cholesterol and presence of Zinc, an essential rare mineral in foods necessary for reproductive health makes pumpkin a vital food ingredient in improvement of vital performance, desire and capacity. It is recommended for those with impaired functions in that area.

With low sodium and high potassium content, pumpkins reduce and prevent hypertension and thus reduce arterial blood clot and stroke. It is recommended for those with problems of the arteries and heart disease. A meal of pumpkins at least three times a week is recommended for those at risk of coronary heart disease.

Pumpkin leaves are used in the village to make mashed food. Mukimo – is rare due to the diminishing stocks of pumpkin in the village. It is a dish with a promising future and will soon start finding its way into hospitals and homes for its nutritional and medicinal value. High vegetable fibre has been shown to have positive effects of reducing cancers and stomach ailments.

Studies by Salmeron et al in 1997 performed at the Harvard University's school of Public health confirmed the hypothesis that high sugar and low whole grain foods increase diabetes risk. The fact that pumpkin is high in fibre and low in carbohydrates makes it an ideal diabetic patient dietary ingredient.

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