

HEALTH BENEFITS OF PUMPKIN SEEDS

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INTRODUCTION:

Pumpkin included in family Cucurbitaceae. It is generally grown in the world as a vegetable. There are three types of the pumpkins are present around the world named as *Cucurbita pepo*, *Cucurbita maxima* and *Cucurbita moschata*. India is the second largest producing pumpkin in the world. In India pumpkin is grown widely during kharif and summer season. The major pumpkin producing states in India are Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Haryana, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh.

Annually pumpkin grows with green leafy vegetable. A pumpkin fruit varies in the size, shape, color, and weight. A pumpkin plant has 12cm long climbing stem and fruit with a round fibrous flesh. They have moderate amount of hard flesh with a thick edible flesh positioned below and seeds at the central cavity. These seeds are protected by a testa.

Pumpkin is one of the widely grown vegetables incredibly in rich in vital antioxidants, and

valuable sources of carotenoids and plays a major role in the formation of pro-vitamin A. Pumpkin seeds become more popular now a day because of its nutritional and health protective values of the seeds. Pumpkin seed contain high oil, protein and total unsaturated fatty acids. Pumpkin seeds are consumed as snack food in many cultures throughout the world.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Nutrients found in pumpkin seeds per 100g are as follows:

| Nutrients | Quantity (per 100g) |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Energy | 559Kcal |
| Protein | 30.23g |
| Total Fat | 49.05g |
| Carbohydrate | 10.71g |
| Total dietary fiber | 6g |
| Calcium | 46mg |
| Iron | 8.82mg |
| Potassium | 809mg |
| Magnesium | 592mg |
| Phosphorous | 1233mg |
| Vitamin C | 1.9µg |
| Folates | 58µg |

(Source: USDA National Nutrient data)

HEALTH BENEFITS:

Pumpkin seeds are small, but they are packed with useful nutrients and nutraceuticals such as phytosterols, amino acids, unsaturated fatty acids, tocopherols, phenolic compounds, cucurbitacins and valuable minerals. All these bioactive compounds are important to maintain a healthy life and well-being.

Nutrients in the pumpkin seeds acts as the principal metabolites that sustain the healthy life and functional ingredients in the seeds plays an important role in disease prevention and health promotion in human beings.

1. Protects from cancers:

High dietary intake of pumpkin seeds reduces the risk of gastric, breast, lung colorectal and prostate cancers due to its high carotenoid content. The protein from pumpkin seeds also helps in inhibition of the growth of leukemia cells.

2. Helps in Management of Diabetes:

High levels of Magnesium in pumpkin seeds helps to lower the blood sugar levels. The protein bound polysaccharides in the pumpkin seeds can increase the serum insulin level, helps to lower the blood glucose level and improve tolerance of glucose So, Inclusion of pumpkin seeds in one's diet helps to lower the risk of diabetes.

3. Cardio protective:

The high content of unsaturated fatty acids (oleic and linoleic acids) in pumpkin seed oil impart health benefits which reduce risks of arteriosclerosis and heart-related disease. Phytosterols in pumpkin seed play a key role in lowering cholesterol levels. The low levels of sodium and high levels of potassium help in improving the cardiac health.



4. Antidepressant effect and insomnia prevention:

Pumpkin seeds are good sources of tryptophan which helps in dealing with depression, anxiety and sleeplessness problems.

5. Antimicrobial effects:

The antimicrobial components in the pumpkin seed oil and the antifungal property of pr-1 protein in the pumpkin seeds fight against the bacteria, parasites, viruses, and fungi which develop many diseases and leads to the death in humans.

6. Consumption of pumpkin seeds inhibits the crystal formation or aggregation which will subsequently reduce the risk of bladder stone disease.

7. Balances hormonal issues:

Pumpkin seed contains specific vitamin, nutrients, and fatty acids that support hormonal function.

OTHER BENEFITS:

The seed also helps to boost immunity, prevent uterine infection, improves the liver and kidney, promote better health, enhances sleep quality, and improves skin health, hair growth, improve bladder function and improve male reproductive health, reduces asthma attacks, and aids in detoxification of the body.



CONCLUSION:

Pumpkin seeds are very small but it has good nutritional and medicinal properties which enormously benefit the human health. Inclusion of few amounts of pumpkin seeds in the diet improve your health and may control several health issues. Although pumpkin seeds consumption is safe and healthy, but eating pumpkin seeds in excess quantity is not good and safe.

