Five ways to get your pumpkin fix

It’s pumpkin season! Everyone’s favorite squash is more than just a fall decoration. It’s loaded with nutrients that help boost your immune system, lower your risk of lung and prostate cancer, and even fight wrinkles. Here are five simple and delicious ways to get your pumpkin fix. For more recipes and wellness tips, go to das.ohio.gov/wellness and click the Participant Login tile.

**Toast the seeds** – Toasting pumpkin seeds is as easy as pie. Just remove the pulp and strings and rinse well. Spread the seeds on a baking sheet coated with nonstick cooking spray. Sprinkle lightly with salt and bake at 325 degrees for about 30 minutes or until lightly toasted. If you want to get a bit more creative, use the seeds in a homemade granola recipe. In addition to the good taste, they’re loaded with all sorts of benefits – like the mineral magnesium, which helps regulate blood pressure.

**Bake a healthy pie** – Think pumpkin pie isn’t healthy? It can be, with a few swaps. For example, cut saturated fat by trying a recipe that calls for silken tofu instead of eggs and cream, and opt for a whole-wheat crust. Don’t forget: The best pumpkin for cooking is a “sugar pie pumpkin” or “sweet pumpkin,” according to the American Diabetes Association. Their flesh is sweeter and less watery than that of larger pumpkins.

**Eat it at breakfast** – Add two tablespoons of 100% pure pumpkin to your morning bowl of oatmeal and you’ll be well on your way to staying healthy this winter. Canned pumpkin actually has more fiber, beta-carotene, potassium, iron, and folate than fresh. It’s great in smoothies, too!

**Feed your face** – Pumpkin is rich in key nutrients that help keep your skin healthy. Why not use it in a homemade face mask? Mix one can of mashed pumpkin and one tablespoon of flaxseed oil together. Apply it in gentle circular strokes on your face and neck. Rinse off with warm water and then moisturize.

**Soup it up** – Pumpkin is a great way to thicken and add flavor to soups or chili. Try making the Roasted Pumpkin Apple Soup recipe.

**Roasted Pumpkin Apple Soup**

**Ingredients**
- 4 pounds sugar pie pumpkin or butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 2-inch chunks (see Tip)
- 4 large sweet-tart apples (such as Empire, Cameo or Braeburn), unpeeled, cored and cut into eighths
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1¼ teaspoons salt, divided
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped
- 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
- ½ cup chopped hazelnuts, toasted (see Tip)
- 2 tablespoons hazelnut oil
Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Toss pumpkin (or squash), apples, olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt and pepper in a large bowl. Spread evenly on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast, stirring once, for 30 minutes. Stir in sage and keep roasting until very tender and starting to brown, 15 to 20 minutes more.
3. Transfer about one-third of the pumpkin (or squash) and apples to a blender along with 2 cups of broth. Purée until smooth. Transfer to a Dutch oven and repeat for two more batches.
4. Season with the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and heat through over medium-low heat, stirring constantly to prevent splattering, for about 6 minutes. Serve each portion topped with hazelnuts and a drizzle of hazelnut oil.

Tips:

- Make it easier to cut a pumpkin, acorn squash or other winter squash: Pierce in several places with a fork, and then microwave on high for 45 to 60 seconds. Use a large sharp knife to cut in half. Remove the seeds and stringy fibers with a spoon.
- To toast chopped nuts, small nuts and seeds, place in a small dry skillet and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.
- Cut down on dishes: A rimmed baking sheet is great for everything from roasting to catching accidental drips and spills. For effortless cleanup and to keep your baking sheets in tip-top shape, line them with a layer of foil before each use.
- Soup can be covered and refrigerated up to 3 days. Reheat in the microwave on high, covered, stirring frequently, or on the stovetop over medium heat.

Prep time: 30 minutes
Total time: 1 hour and 10 minutes

Nutrition info

Serving size: 1 cup  
Calories: 180  
Fat: 9 g  
Carbohydrates: 25 g  
Protein: 3 g  
Fiber: 6 g  
Sodium: 525 mg  
Potassium: 570 mg

Find more healthy recipes perfect for fall by logging into your account at das.ohio.gov/wellness (click on the Participant Login tile to log in or register). Be sure to join in on the October Green Day Challenge for points you can earn for a payroll addition.

*Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Always consult a qualified medical professional before beginning any nutritional program or exercise program.