Pumpkin Panacea

When Europeans discovered America they found a plethora of new flora. We have mentioned the importance of the discovery of the capsicum family in previous issues, and everyone knows about the discovery of corn and how it has benefited mankind. Another great find was the discovery of the family of squash. Pumpkin is a Native American squash that is so popular that it is now grown on all continents except Antarctica. Many consider it as a super food with wonderful medicinal qualities. Just one cup supplies 245% of the daily required value for Vitamin A. It also contains good amounts of the B complex, Vitamin C, K, and with the seeds it contains the full spectrum of vitamin E (alpha, delta and gamma-Tocopherols plus the newly discovered Tocomonoenols). It is also a good source of Copper (14%), Iron (10%), and contains Calcium, Magnesium, Manganese, Phosphorus, Selenium and Zinc. The seeds also contain Zinc at the rate of 10 mg. per 3.5 oz. Just the color of pumpkins would indicate a high Carotene content, having both Carotene A (amounting to 515 mcg.) and Carotene B (3100 mcg.) Other phyto-nutrients include Crypto-xanthin B (2145 mcg.) and Lutein-zeaxanthin (1500mcg.) All excellent for good eyesight, a healthy heart and wrinkle free skin.

Pumpkins are high in nutrients and also high in fiber but low in calories, making them a good food for weight loss. While losing weight with pumpkin one might also notice a reduction in hay fever symptoms, migraines and earaches. The cold mashed up pulp has been used to counter burns and the leaves have been used to reduce the swelling in sprains, lower fevers, cure diarrhea, and ward off cancer.

The seeds are remarkable. The consumption of the seeds reduces prostate enlargement and reduces the possibility of prostate cancer. The seeds have been used for kidney problems,
including kidney stones, for gout, edema and even getting rid of tape worms. Another miracle: the seed oil reduces symptoms of female hormone insufficiency.

We would all benefit by eating more of this wonderful squash. Pumpkins aren’t just for carving and smashing.

**David Christopher** is a Master Herbalist and the director of The School of Natural Healing. He also co-hosts the popular radio show "A Healthier You" and is a popular international teacher and lecturer.