

BROADCAST-Harvesting the benefit of pumpkins beyond Thanksgiving

Most Thanksgiving meals will be topped off with the traditional pumpkin pie. And ... even though pumpkin spice make its annual fall appearance in everything from hummus to lattes for dogs, an OSF HealthCare dietitian says be careful.

Kaela Ketcham pumpkin flavor is often added to sugary products.

“You do want to be cautious about what pumpkin spice products you are buying because one, they may not contain any pumpkin at all and two they might just contain a lot of sugar.”(:10)

Real pumpkin is good for you on so many levels – it has lots of vitamins and minerals, it is fiber rich so you feel full after eating it, and ... it’s low in calories. So, Ketcham suggests using a little real pumpkin as much as possible.

“If you’re making a smoothie, you can always add always add a little bit, two tablespoon or so of pureed pumpkin. Even if you’re making pumpkin spice lattes at home, you can even add a couple of tablespoons of real pumpkin to get that depth of the pumpkin flavor to have it a little bit healthier, not as much sugar and actually get more pumpkin than what they use in a store.” (:19)

While there’s now pumpkin-spiced protein powder, Ketcham says it’s easy to use real pumpkin and it’s better for you.

“You can also incorporate it in your oatmeal. You can put it in soups and stews and chilies. I saw a recipe for pasta shells. You stuff pasta shells with pumpkin and cheeses. You really get the benefit of pumpkin all year round without having to put it in a baked good and then putting all that sugar on top of it.” (:22)

If you would like the recipe for that pumpkin ravioli, you can find it in our website version of this story!