PUMPKIN SEEDS

These are loaded with zinc and magnesium. But you can do damage by eating them incorrectly. Firstly they should be eaten in small amounts so you don't load up on too much omega 6 fats – restrict your amount to about 2 Tbsp a day, and if possible, balance them with omega 3 rich foods like walnuts, or flax seeds.

Get the raw seeds because the commercial ones are often roasted at a dangerously high heat – if you want to roast them, roast at less than 275ºF for about 10-15 min. Don't buy the salted or coated seeds, add your own healthy salt or spices. If you can, buy organic, no pesticides on your pumpkin seeds. As you age, these things become more important; remove chemically treated pumpkin seeds from your diet. They should not smell metallic, no oily film on your fingers after handling them, no chemically smell, no bitter taste. Even if they are organic, storing them next to heat or sunlight can cause oxidation so if you store in the bag, seal it tightly and keep in the refrigerator, or keep in glass container in the refrigerator. SOOOO, eat in the purist form, in small quantities and store properly. Store the seeds in cool, dark place, ideally in a glass jar so they don't go rancid.

Pumpkin seeds have tryptophan so some think they will be good eaten before bedtime to promote sleep, but eaten in large amounts, and especially salted, they can disrupt your digestive system because the fats take hours to break down so your stomach and liver and forced to stay active when they should be resting so eat them at suppertime (eg. Sprinkle on dinner salad) and you will still get their calming effect. Eating the whole pumpkin seed with the shell intact gives you extra fiber for your digestive system.

Pumpkin seeds – 1 oz, a small handful, has 156 mg magnesium – about the same as a magnesium capsule! Always best get your nutrition from foods instead of supplements (food magnesium from pumpkin seeds is about 60% better than glycinate. When magnesium is surrounded by a whole food – plant which has fiber, proteins, zinc, and phospholipids, the release of magnesium is slowed, helping to be better assimilated into muscle and bone tissue. This is important after 65 years of age because the kidneys become less efficient at retaining magnesium so some magnesium is probably being flushed away from the supplements. Pumpkin seeds also are naturally high in zinc and which are needed for absorption. You can roast pumpkin seeds at 300F for 15 minutes, increases the bio-availability. Sprinkle on oatmeal, in salads, or as a snack. Vit. B6 (as in chicken, turkey, bananas) acts as a cofactor that activates the enzyme systems most efficiently in your nerves and muscles. After age 75 your body loses 35% of its ability to extract minerals from food compared to when you were in your 40's.

Don't combine with dairy or high fat yogurt **eg. Smoothies. Dairy competes with zinc and magnesium absorption. Instead eat them with berries or citrus which has Vit C enhancing mineral absorption. Try soaking raw seeds overnight with a pinch of seasalt this reduces phytates which might block mineral absorption – in the morning rinse and lightly toast with low heat and they will be easier to digest and richer in nutrients. Eating in morning or mid-day is best, that's when the digestive enzymes and bile flow are strongest. If you buy pumpkin seed oil, keep in glass container in refrigerator and keep for short term – if it smells a little off, throw it away.**