

# Nutrient Breakdown: Winter Squash

As you get busy in your kitchen this week, we hope that you plan for wonderful winter squash to take up a prime place at your Thanksgiving table! Not only do they taste delicious, the nutritional content of these orange and yellow beauties is excellent. FULL of [Vitamin A](#), pumpkin and butternut squash support bone growth, reproduction and immune system health. (The recommended daily allowance of vitamin A for men is 900 micrograms *RAE* - retinol activity equivalents - and 700 micrograms *RAE* for women.) Butternut squash contains a whopping 1,144 *RAE* per 1 cup of cooked squash! Cooked pumpkin contains 706 *RAE* per 1 cup.



As you can see, these two winter squashes are excellent sources of this important nutrient. Vitamin A plays an integral role in the health of our eyes and skin. Vitamin A is needed to form rhodopsin, a vitamin A containing pigment protein that is important for controlling our ability to see in the dark. Skin cells rely on vitamin A for both structure and function. Vitamin A helps our body differentiate and direct *immature* skin cells so they can develop into the *mature* skin cells we see on the outside of our bodies. Lack of Vitamin A can result in abnormally dry skin, night blindness, keratomalacia (breakdown of the cornea of the eye), and Bitot's spots. Butternut squash is also a good source of potassium!

Remember to always strive for getting all your essential vitamins and minerals from eating **FOOD**!



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