

Pumpkin skin may scare away germs

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Pumpkin skin contains a substance with an antibacterial effect against microbes that cause millions of cases of yeast infections in adults and infants each year. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

The skin of that pumpkin you carve into a Jack-o'-Lantern to scare away ghosts and goblins on Halloween contains a substance that could put a scare into microbes that cause millions of cases of yeast infections in adults and infants each year. That's the conclusion of a new study in the current issue of *ACS' Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.

In the study, Kyung-Soo Hahm, Yoonkyung Park and colleagues note that some disease-causing [microbes](#) are becoming resistant to existing [antibiotics](#). As a result, scientists worldwide are searching for new antibiotics. Past studies hinted that [pumpkin](#), long used as folk medicine in some countries, might have antibiotic effects.

The scientists extracted proteins from pumpkin rinds to see if the proteins inhibit the growth of microbes, including *Candida albicans* (*C. albicans*). That fungus causes vaginal yeast infections, diaper rash in infants, and other health problems. One protein had powerful effects in inhibiting the growth of *C. albicans*, in cell culture experiments, with no obvious toxic effects. The pumpkin protein could be developed into a natural medicine for fighting yeast infections in humans, the report suggests. The protein also blocked the growth of several [fungi](#) that attack important plant crops and could be useful as an agricultural fungicide, they add.

More information: "Antifungal Mechanism of a Novel Antifungal Protein from Pumpkin Rinds against Various Fungal Pathogens", *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, [pubs.acs.org/stoken/presspac/p ... /10.1021/jf902005g](https://pubs.acs.org/stoken/presspac/p.../10.1021/jf902005g)

Source: American Chemical Society ([news](#) : [web](#))

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