If you start your pumpkin pies, breads, muffins, soups, or stews by cutting into a whole pumpkin, more power to you.

But if you want to cook with pumpkin when there are none in the store, or you need less than an entire pumpkin, or you just don’t feel like dealing with all that peeling, seeding, chopping, and cooking, there’s an easier way.

Pumpkin purée.

Canned pumpkin purée is nothing new. But most cans have liners that contain BPA (bisphenol A), a chemical that mimics estrogen. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences has expressed concern about BPA’s “effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and children.”

But you needn’t worry about BPA with Farmer’s Market Organic Pumpkin or Pacific Organic Pumpkin Puree. Both come in shelf-stable cartons. (Look for them at a health food store or in the “natural foods” section of your supermarket.)

The ingredient list: pumpkin. Period. Not that pumpkin needs any additions. Each half cup of Farmer’s Market, for example, has 420 percent of a day’s vitamin A, 10 percent of a day’s iron, 4 percent of a day’s calcium, and 4 grams of fiber.

All for only 50 calories. Not too shabby.

Farmer’s Market also sells Organic Pumpkin, as well as Organic Butternut Squash and Organic Sweet Potato Puree, in cans with BPA-free liners, so you can toss them into that soup with no worries.

But don’t stop there. Try adding a purée to your pasta sauces, curries, or risottos.

It’s time to pump it up.

Farmer’s Market Foods: (541) 757-1497
Pacific Foods: (503) 924-4570

“Go ahead, take a bite and see where we got the name,” says the Wicked Whoopies Web site. “Our bestselling flavor, Classic Chocolate, will make you shout, ‘Whoopie!’”

Yup. There’s nothing like what Wicked calls “rich, dark chocolate cake shells with light, fluffy cream filling” to make you shout “Whoopie!” Of course, you might shout something else if you realized that you’re eating sugar, white flour, modified food starch, eggs, partially hydrogenated soybean and cottonseed oil, and sodium stearoyl lactylate.

And you might shout yet something else if you noticed, after downing the whole thing, that the Nutrition Facts on the package are for just half a Whoopie.

True, the calories (370) on the label aren’t low. But the full Whoopie has 740 calories and 12 teaspoons of added sugar (two days’ quota for women and around a 1½-day supply for men), plus 9 grams of saturated fat (half a day’s limit). It also delivers a bonus 5 grams (2½ days’ worth) of trans fat, thanks to the “cream” filling, which is made of partially hydrogenated oils.

Think of each Whoopie as 10 Oreo cookies dunked in a quarter-cup of Betty Crocker Rich & Creamy Vanilla Frosting.

Wicked Whoopies sells more than 20 varieties online (and at its two bake shops in Maine). While you’d get little or no trans fat in the mini whoopie pies that are sold at Starbucks (190 calories) or Trader Joe’s (290 calories), they’re all still essentially sugar, flour, and oil.

Whoop dee doo.

Wicked Whoopie: (877) 447-2629