

WHY THE CRAZE OVER CHIA SEEDS?



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Chia seeds are the latest health food craze. Like sardine, salmon, flaxseeds and walnuts, chia seed is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acid. Being a good energy source, osteoporosis prevention, stabilising the blood sugar and promoting weight loss are just some of the amazing benefits offered by these tiny black and white seeds!

When soaked in water, chia seeds develop a gelatinous texture, this making it easy to incorporate them in cooked cereal or other dishes. They keep you full for a longer period as they expand and provide a satiated feeling. They are also gluten-free.

A tablespoon of chia seeds is packed with a good amount of protein, fibre, healthy fats, calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus and heart healthy omega fats. That is really a lot offer in a tiny little seed! Moreover, it has

- fibre 10g/2 tablespoons
- iron 2mg/oz
- calcium 179mg/oz

A sachet of chia seeds (8g) provides:

- 36 calories
- Protein - 1.6g
- Fat - 2.7g (saturated fat - 0.3g, polyunsaturated fat - 2.1g, omega 3 - 1.5g, omega 6 - 0.6g, monosaturated fat - 0.3g)
- Carbohydrates 0.3g
- Fibre - 3g

The good thing about chia seeds is that they are shelf-stable so buying them in large quantities could save some money. Chia seeds need not be ground like flaxseed, because they do not go rancid.

Do take note that too much of a good thing is never good. The same goes for chia seeds—it can lead to digestive distress. So, do not go beyond two to three tablespoons a day; they are high in fibre and that could cause a stomach upset.

Starting your day with a good breakfast is one of the best health decisions you can make. It is important to make your breakfast meal by including highly nutritious foods such as whole grain breads, cereals, fruits, and low-fat dairy products. Add some chia seeds which can be eaten raw or sprinkled over cereal, yoghurt or salad. Why? Because chia seeds:

- improve insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance. The soluble fibre in the seeds helps to stabilise blood glucose levels. The gel formation phenomenon creates the barrier between carbohydrates and digestive enzymes that ultimately slows down the conversion of carbohydrates into simple sugar! Take heed that deteriorating insulin sensitivity is a precursor to pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes.
- are good sources of bone minerals: calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and protein. It is also an excellent source of calcium for people with lactose intolerance!
- can aid in weight loss, when combined with low glycaemic index (GI) food. The high fibre and protein content of chia seeds naturally reduce the appetite and food intake.
- are a good source of zinc, which plays a vital role in the antioxidant defense system of the body. Zinc and iron together with copper, thiamin (vitamin B1), niacin (vitamin B3), help promote healthy hair growth.
- and their high fibre content and swelling action aid in absorbing the toxins, as well as cleansing and soothing the colon.
- are energising! Athletes worldwide report increased strength and stamina and use it as an endurance enhancing food. They absorb more water and are great during exercise or exposure to heat.
- can be added to water or your drink. Try 2 to 3 tablespoons of chia seeds with 240ml of almond milk for a delicious drink.

References
www.eatright.org
<http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>
www.webmd.com

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A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

YOKI WONG WHO HAS TYPE 2 DIABETES WAS INTRODUCED TO CHIA SEEDS A YEAR AGO BUT SHE REMAINED SCEPTICAL, UNTIL A DOCTOR FRIEND GOT HER REAQUAINTED WITH THE SEED IN APRIL THIS YEAR. SHE SHARES HER STORY:

It's seldom that I get so excited over a food product especially a product like chia seed, which has no taste, and unappetising in appearance.

I started taking chia on a daily basis four months ago and, as they say, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. I can truly understand now why this unassuming little seed has been the staple food of the ancient Incan, Mayan and Aztec civilisations.

There are some 150 varieties of chia seeds in the world and it is hard to believe there are so many nutrients and so much power packed into such a tiny seed! Every minute seed is loaded with fibre, omega-3, calcium, protein, anti-oxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals.

I experienced a difference from my first scoop (two tablespoons) of chia seeds. I have been suffering from IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) for several years and with my first intake of chia, my IBS cleared! I have not had a single diarrheic episode since.

Other healthy changes I experienced include:

- A 5 to 6 kg body weight loss without dieting
- Clearer, firmer skin
- Improved eyesight which allows me to read smaller text again
- Stronger bladder/kidney leading to uninterrupted sleep at night
- Reduced hair fall and softer hair
- More energy
- Gradual drop in glucose level in my blood from 198 to 118 (and still dropping)

Chia seeds have become my favourite food and an indispensable part of my daily diet.

NB: Chia seed, in its best form, is just pure natural organic food; it is not a supplement or a medicine.