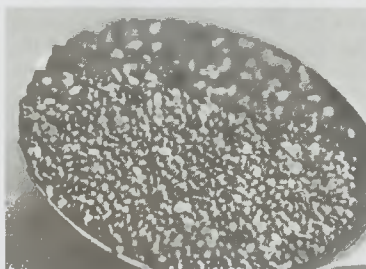


Top 10 Health Benefits of Chia Seeds

By Jen Hathwell



Chia seeds are native to South America and have been a staple in Mayan and Aztec diets for centuries. Today, they draw the interest of many people for their health benefits and uses in cooking. It turns out the South American staple is a rich source of nutrients and antioxidants.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Chia seeds are rich in polyunsaturated fats, especially omega-3 fatty acids. Chia seeds' lipid profile is composed of 60 percent omega-3s, making them one of the richest plant-based sources of these fatty acids — specifically, of alpha-linolenic acid, or ALA. The omega-3s in chia seeds can help reduce inflammation, enhance cognitive performance and reduce high cholesterol.

Fiber

Fiber is associated with reducing inflammation, lowering cholesterol and regulating bowel function. Chia seeds are an excellent source of fiber, with a whopping 10 grams in only 2 tablespoons. That is one-third of the daily recommended intake of fiber per day.

Antioxidants

Chia seeds are rich in antioxidants that help protect the body from free radicals, aging and cancer. The high antioxidant profile also helps them have a long shelf life. They last almost two years without refrigeration.

Minerals

Two tablespoons of chia seeds contain 18 percent of the DRI for calcium, 35 percent for phosphorus, 24 percent for magnesium and about 50 percent for manganese. These nutrients help you prevent hypertension and maintain a healthy weight, and are important for energy metabolism and a part of DNA synthesis.

Satiety

Satiety is the feeling of being full and satisfied, which helps lower food cravings between meals. The combination of pro-

tein, fiber and the gelling action of chia seeds when mixed with liquids all contribute to their satiating effects.

Gluten-Free

Chia seeds contain no gluten or grains. Therefore, all of the nutritional benefits of chia seeds can be obtained on a gluten-free diet.

Egg Replacer

The outer layer of chia seeds swells when mixed with liquids to form a gel. This can be used in place of eggs to lower cholesterol and increase the nutrient content of foods and baked goods. To make the egg replacement, mix 1 tablespoon of chia seeds with 3 tablespoons of water and let sit for 15 minutes.

Can Be Digested Whole

Unlike flaxseeds, which are also high in omega-3 fatty acids, fiber and minerals, chia seeds do not need to be ground in order to obtain their nutrient or egg-replacement benefits.

Dyslipidemia

A study published in the "British Journal of Nutrition" showed that chia seeds as a dietary fat source can lower triglycerides and cholesterol levels while increasing HDL or "good" cholesterol. The study also found that when substituting chia seeds for other fat sources, such as corn oil, the ALA was able to prevent high triglyceride levels and reduce central obesity.

Blood Sugar Regulation

Chia seeds can play an important role in regulating insulin levels. They can reduce insulin resistance and decrease abnormally high levels of insulin in the blood.

Why You Should Go Nuts for Nuts

By Rachel Grumman Bender

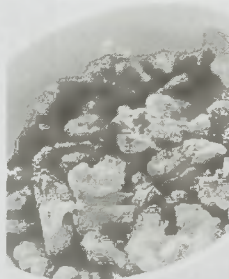
If nuts aren't in your regular snack rotation, you're missing out on major disease-fighting nutrients that protect your heart, boost brainpower, and more.



Nuts are underrated as nutritious snacks — particularly raw tree nuts, such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, and more, which have been linked to lower cholesterol, better heart health, weight control, and even a lower cancer risk.

Unfortunately, too few Americans eat

nuts regularly: They account for less than eight percent of daily antioxidant intake. "That may be because people are afraid of the fat and calories in nuts, or they find plain nuts boring," says Joy Bauer, Today Show nutritionist and bestselling author. "That's a shame, because a small handful can pack your diet with filling protein, fiber, unsaturated fats, and important vitamins and minerals." Here's how your health benefits each time you nosh on a handful of nuts.



Walnuts: Inflammation Fighters

In addition to containing the most antioxidants of all nuts, which help protect your body from the cellular damage that contributes to heart disease, cancer, and premature aging, "walnuts are also the richest in omega-3 fatty acids, which fight inflammation," says Bauer. They're an especially great way to get these healthy unsaturated fats if you're not a fan of fish, where these types of fats are predominantly found. A walnut snack may also turn around a bad day during that time of the month: The manganese they contain may reduce PMS symptoms.

Serving info: About 14 walnut halves = 185 calories, 18 grams fat

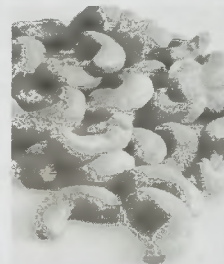


Almonds: Good for Your Gut

Almonds contain the most fiber — about three grams per ounce — compared to other nuts, and are richest in vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant. Almonds may even help you slip into those skinny jeans: In one International Journal of Obesity study, when two groups of obese adults followed low-calorie diets for six months, those who included almonds in their weight loss plans lost more weight than those who ate more complex carbohydrates. Other research shows that almonds are especially healthy for people worried about their blood sugar: Those who ate about 20 percent of their calories from almonds for four months saw their bad LDL cholesterol drop and their insulin resistance decrease compared to a control group who didn't eat them. Almonds may even safeguard your gut: A test-tube study (funded by the Almond Board of California) found that the nuts

raised levels of good bacteria that bolster the body's immune system.

Serving info: About 23 nuts = 170 calories, 15 grams fat



Cashews: Brainpower Boosters

Cashews are particularly rich in iron and zinc. "Iron helps deliver oxygen to all of your cells, which can prevent anemia, and zinc is critical to immune health and healthy vision," says Bauer. Cashews are also a good source of magnesium: One ounce provides almost 25 percent of your daily need. Magnesium may help improve memory and protect against age-related memory loss, according to a study in the journal *Neuron*.

Serving info: about 18 nuts = 165 calories, 13 grams fat



Pecans: Artery Defenders

Pecans aren't just for making tasty pies, they can also help improve your heart health. "Pecans are among the most antioxidant-rich nuts," says Bauer. "They may help prevent plaque formation in your arteries." In fact, a *Journal of Nutrition* study (funded partly by the National Pecan Shellers Association) found that consuming pecans can help lower LDL cholesterol levels by as much as 33 percent. Pecans may also buffer your brain health, according to an animal study from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The vitamin E found in the nuts could delay progression of degenerative neurological diseases like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Serving info: About 18 halves = 200 calories, 21 grams fat

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Great is Thy Faithfulness