

Chia seeds are one of those rare “superfoods” that are ACTUALLY worthy of that hefty tag. These nutrient dense seeds are among the healthiest foods on earth, and provide a host of benefits for the human body.

Funnily enough then, these little nutritional gems have been used as everything from horse fodder to currencies in different countries and cultures throughout the history!

Interesting tidbits aside, in this article, we’ll try to answer some of the most burning questions you might have about chia seeds. Find out what’s the real story behind this “new” but actually centuries old superfood in the next few paras.



**Photo Credit:** <https://shilohfarmsblog.com/2013/03/13/food-for-thought/>

## **Q1: What Are Chia Seeds exactly?**

These tiny seeds belong to the Salvia Hispanica family of desert plants, one that is commonly found in Mexico, Bolivia and nowadays grown in the USA too. The word “chia” used to stand for “strength” in the ancient Mayan culture where they used these seeds as energy and strength boosters.

Modern science backs this Mayan tradition too. Chia seeds have been found to be a highly concentrated source of omega-3 fatty acids, protein, carbs, dietary fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. All ingredients for an impressive food item that packs a solid nutritional punch in just one spoonful.

## **Q2. What Are Chia Seeds Good For?**

Turns out, a lot! In addition to being energy boosters, chia seeds also offer the following benefits:

- Lower blood pressure levels
- Reduced risk of heart diseases
- Anti-inflammatory action
- Fight against Type 2 diabetes
- Lower bad cholesterol levels and improves the healthy ones
- Protection against arthritis, auto-immune disease
- Improved bone health
- Protection for liver
- Fights against breast and cervical cancer



*Photo*

*Credit: <http://www.taste.com.au/recipes/40209/supersized+cranberry+and+chia+seed+coconut+biscuits>*

### **Q3. Can Chia Seeds Be Eaten Raw?**

Yes! The most common ways of eating them uncooked is by sprinkling them over or mixing them in with other dishes for example, you can add chia seeds to your oatmeal, yogurt or any other breakfast cereal. They work great with sandwiches too (tuna, egg, pick what you like!). You can mix them with spreads like peanut butter. Alternatively, you can add them to your salads or granola bars and even juices or shakes too.

A word of caution while eating or swallowing them dry though. Chia seeds create a gelatin after coming in contact with water. Therefore, consuming chia seeds dry and then drinking **water can lead to dysphagia or esophageal blockage**. Avoid doing so, especially if you have

trouble swallowing or have a history of dysphagia.

#### **Q4. Can Chia Seeds Be Cooked?**

Absolutely! You can make chia seed porridge by mixing them with warm milk or grind the seeds into flour and then, use it as a substitute for the all purpose flour. The finely powdered chia seeds can be used while baking bread or cookies too. Additionally, you can add chia seeds to thicken soups, gravies and sauces. And if you have picky kids at home (or grown ups for that matter), you can quietly slip these tiny seeds into more favoured dishes such as lasagna or casseroles and even, meatballs!



Photo Credit: [www.drDiane.com](http://www.drDiane.com)

## Q5. Can Chia Seeds Really Make Me Lose Weight?

There are conflicting **research findings existing that both establish and reject chia seeds as weight loss inducing superfoods**. However, it is also true that they are a new entrant in the health food circles and so, not enough research exists to take a firm stand on chia seeds' weight loss impact.

Having said that, chia seeds are a massive source of healthy fatty acids, dietary fibre and protein which makes them a perfect addition to any weight-loss diet. Just 1 oz of chia seeds will provide your body with 138 calories (9% of daily calorie requirement) and 10 grams of fibre content (as much as 30-40 percent of the required daily fibre intake).

Also, as they take a gel-like form after interacting with water, chia seeds expand in the belly thus promoting the feeling of fullness and satiety.

## Q6. What Are the Side Effects Of Chia Seeds?

We mentioned how swallowing them dry and then drinking water can lead to complications. Additionally, there are a few side effects associated with eating chia seeds as well.

i) Gastrointestinal issues that include constipation, diarrhoea, bloating and stomach ache. To avoid this, make sure you eat chia seeds in moderation accompanied with plenty of water.

ii) Low blood pressure due to the presence of a high amount of omega-3 fatty acids. People who are already on prescribed blood thinners must consult their doctor before taking chia seeds in their diets.

iii) Although uncommon, food allergies from chia seeds do exist. The symptoms may include rashes, troubled breathing, nausea, diarrhoea, watery eyes and swollen tongue.

## **Q7. Are Chia Seeds Gluten Free?**

Gluten forms when the protein content in certain food-grains like wheat, combines with water. This is known to lead to many serious health complications particularly in people who are allergic or sensitive to gluten or suffering from the celiac disease.

Thankfully, chia seeds happen to be 100% gluten free! Therefore, everyone who is allergic or non-allergic to gluten and who is trying to adopt a gluten-free diet can readily include chia seeds in their daily diets. What's more, you can use them as a substitute for ingredients such as xanthan and agar gums while cooking or baking!

## **Q8. How Much Chia Seeds Should I Eat Per Day?**

Although there are no restrictions as such on the amount of chia seeds you can consume on a daily basis, there are certain minimum requirements to fulfil the daily nutrition needs.

- Adults should take at least 20 grams of chia seeds daily to fulfil the daily requirement of omega-3 fatty acids. The consumption may vary depending upon the nutrient content you want to increase in your diet (e.g. calcium, fibre or omega-3's).
- Kids in the age group 10-18 years should not take more than 10 grams of chia seeds. Any dosage over and above that amount is unnecessary for their body's nutritional requirement.
- Children who are under 10 years should not be given more than 1 tablespoon of chia seeds in their diet.
- For people with special needs, example, those who require cardiovascular shielding, the ideal intake amount is 35-45 grams of blended chia seeds everyday for three months.

So do these answers satisfy your curiosity about chia seeds? How about trying a [healthy snack that contains chia seeds](#)? Our Rejuvenation Topper contains a good mix of Almond,

Pumpkin seed, Goji Berry, and of course, chia seeds. Give it a go!