

Wellness Journey Column

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Did you know that the famous 'chia pet' from the 80s was a superfood? Yes, this gluten-free ancient grain is currently experiencing a glorious renaissance and is a healthy addition to the daily diet.

Why would you want to eat chia seeds?

Chia seeds contain the following:

2 times the protein of any other seed or grain

5 times the calcium of milk, plus boron which is a trace mineral that helps transfer calcium into your bones

2 times the amount of potassium in bananas

3 times the reported antioxidant strength of blueberries

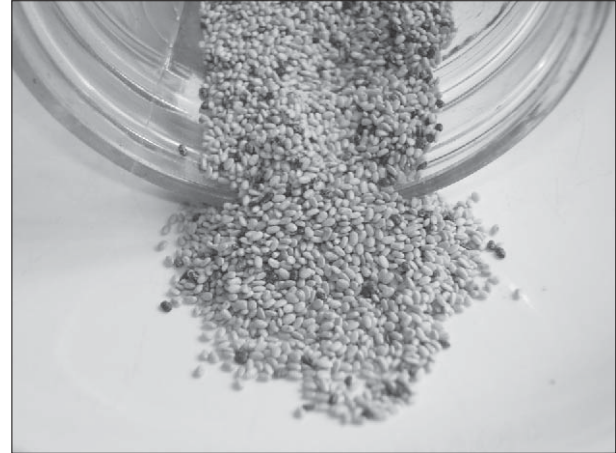
3 times more iron than spinach

copious amounts of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids

Interestingly, chia seeds are a complete source of protein, providing all the essential amino acids. They are also a wonderful source of soluble fibre and have high antioxidant content.

What are some other benefits of eating chia seeds?

A favourite of mine is that it provides a good source of fat and omega 3. By weight, chia contains more omega 3 than salmon. Omega 3 essential fatty acids are very helpful in reducing inflammation.



Chia seeds have also been shown to aid intestinal regularity as they have lots of FIBER. Can you believe that chia seeds have more fibre than wheat bran (e.g., Bran Buds or All Bran) and won't bloat your belly? Bran cereals are highly refined, despite their brown color and are missing many of the essential nutrients.

Adding these seeds to your diet can improve

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insulin sensitivity and lower insulin means that it will indirectly help with belly fat as fat in this area is associated with excess insulin (and cortisol).

The chia seed gels when it becomes wet and this gel, when in our digestive systems, helps prevent some of the food (hence calories) that we eat from getting absorbed into our system. Make chia gel by soaking the seeds in water (try 1 tbsp in ¼ cup water). This blockage of calorie absorption makes the chia seed a great diet helper. Eating the seeds also helps dieters by making them feel fuller faster so they will be less hungry!

Does it help in regulating blood sugar levels?

Absolutely! Studies show that eating chia seed slows down how fast our bodies convert carbohydrate calories into simple sugars. This leads scientists to believe that the chia seed may have great benefits for diabetics and those wanting to prevent diabetes.

Do I have to grind them like flaxseeds to get the nutrients?

No, you don't because your stomach acids break down the seed very easily (unlike flaxseeds). If

you don't grind flaxseeds to release the healthy fats then they pass right through you.

Where can I find these seeds?

These seeds are available at natural food stores or in the natural section of your local supermarket.

How do I use them?

- Sprinkle the seeds onto sandwiches, salads and into cooked sauces
- Grind them in a coffee grinder to make “chia flour” and add to baking goods
- Sprinkle on organic yogurt, kefir, in your cereal, in a smoothie
- Sprinkle on a rice cracker with some almond butter, cinnamon and sliced apples

The information and guidance provided is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. You are advised to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.