

What Are the Benefits of Drinking Chia Seed Water?

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Chia seeds are known for their various health benefits. They have become popular on social media, where they are touted as a way to improve digestive health and promote weight loss.

When mixed with water, the chia seeds form a gel-like mixture. These tiny black and white seeds contain large amounts of fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, protein, essential minerals, and antioxidants.

What's in Chia Seed Water?

Chia seed water is a simple drink made by soaking chia seeds in water. They absorb 10 times their weight in water, causing the water to become gel-like. When combined with the chia seeds, the water becomes a healthful, nutrient-dense drink.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), a 1-ounce serving of chia seeds contains:

- 138 calories
- 8.7 grams (g) fat
- 9.75 g fiber
- 4.68 g protein
- 0 g sugar
- 179 milligrams (mg) calcium
- 95 mg magnesium
- 115 mg potassium
- 13.9 micrograms (mcg) folate (vitamin B9)

- 6.72 g polyunsaturated fats (omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids)

Chia seeds also contain smaller amounts of other nutrients, including vitamin A, copper, and vitamin E.

9 Potential Benefits of Chia Seed Water

Chia is an annual herbaceous plant whose seeds are consumed. Chia seeds are high in nutrients and have many health-promoting properties.

Research has found that chia seeds can lead to improvements in digestive health, blood pressure, and blood sugar. They also offer antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and immunostimulatory (immune system) effects.

Digestive Health

A diet high in fiber can prevent constipation and keep your digestive tract healthy. The daily recommended amount of fiber for adults is 25 to 30 grams. A 1-ounce serving of chia seeds contains up to 10 grams of fiber, helping to meet up to a third of your daily requirement.

Because they are a great source of dietary fiber, chia seeds might help to regulate bowel movements and even prevent constipation, especially for in people with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) with constipation (IBS-C).

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

IBS is a common long-term functional gastrointestinal disorder due to altered communication between the brain and gut. The two main types of IBS are IBS with constipation and IBS with diarrhea (IBS-D):

- IBS-C causes stomach pain, bloating, and delayed or infrequent bowel movements, which can be hard or lumpy.
- IBS-D causes stomach pain with frequent urges to move the bowels. Stools are loose or watery.

Chia seeds, with their fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, are also helpful for managing gut bacteria. These two nutrients can increase good bacteria, decrease harmful bacteria, and reduce inflammation in the gut lining.

Inflammation

Chia seeds contain high amounts of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a type of omega-3 fatty acid. Omega-3 fatty acids play an essential role in brain and heart health and reduce inflammation throughout the body.

There is much research on the benefits of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids for inflammation and inflammation-related disorders. However, no studies have shown that consuming chia seed water can reduce the risk of heart disease, neurological disorders, or other diseases causing inflammation.

Weight Loss

The recent trend of drinking chia seed water has become popular because of its potential weight loss benefits. The proposed benefit is that the water mixture can reduce overeating by promoting a feeling of fullness.

One 2017 study examined the impact of chia seed consumption as a midmorning snack on appetite management. The test ran for three days, testing three snack combinations, one different combination each day per participant. The three combinations were yogurt with no chia seeds, yogurt with 7 g of chia seeds, or yogurt with 14 g of chia seeds.

On the days they received a snack with chia seeds, study participants reported lower scores for hunger, additional food consumption, and desire for sugary foods. They also reported higher scores for satiety (a satisfied feeling of fullness). On the days study participants had the yogurt with chia seeds, they consumed smaller lunches.

There is very little evidence confirming any direct effects of chia seed water on weight loss. However, chia seeds contain a good amount of fiber, and getting enough fiber in your diet can improve weight loss efforts. According to a 2015 *Annals of Internal Medicine* study, eating as much as 30 g of fiber daily could help you to lose weight.

Heart Health

Chia seeds are typically marketed as heart-healthy because they contain high amounts of ALA, an omega-3 fatty acid. ALA is the most common fatty acid in the Western diet and is mainly found in plant oils, chia and flax seeds, leafy green vegetables, and some animal fats. It is an essential fat that the body cannot make but needs for growth and development.

Foods and supplements that are high in ALA may reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. ALA has also been found to have antiarrhythmic effects, which can reduce or prevent a fast or irregular heart rate.

Bone Health

Chia seeds are rich in calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and protein, all nutrients that promote bone strength and density. Research shows that consuming chia seeds can reduce fracture risk and support bone mineralization.

Unfortunately, much of the research on chia seeds and bone health is related to animal models. It is unknown if similar health benefits could benefit people.

Blood Sugar

Some evidence suggests that chia seeds may support healthy blood sugar. When chia seeds are consumed, glucose is released more slowly in the body without insulin spikes. This effect also prevents fat from accumulating in the body.

Chia seeds might also help in the management of type 2 diabetes and weight. One study reported in 2017 aimed to assess the effect of chia seeds on body weight, visceral fat (belly fat), and obesity-related factors in people with type 2 diabetes who were overweight or had obesity.

In this study, participants who consumed chia seeds lost more weight than those who did not. They also had greater reductions in waist circumference and less inflammation.

The study's researchers concluded the chia seeds were helpful for promoting weight loss and improving obesity-related factors while maintaining normal blood

sugar levels. They further added that chia seeds might be a valuable dietary addition to conventional therapy for managing obesity related to diabetes.

Blood Pressure

Consuming chia seeds could reduce high blood pressure (hypertension). They contain an antioxidant compound called chlorogenic acid, which has been found to lower blood pressure and improve blood vessel function.

Additional compounds in chia seeds that might help bring down blood pressure include magnesium, calcium, potassium, and ALA.

Chronic Disease

Research suggests chia seeds may help to prevent a variety of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. This is because chia seeds have been related to different medicinal effects, such as:

- Decreased inflammation
- Improved blood sugar
- Regulated blood pressure

Increased Protein Intake

Chia seeds are a complete protein, which means they contain all nine essential amino acids that the body cannot make. Eating protein-rich foods can help you feel full, which could reduce appetite and promote weight loss.

How to Make and Use Chia Seed Water

Chia seeds absorb water quickly and can expand up to 10 times their weight. To dissolve in water, place one-fourth cup of chia seeds in 8 ounces of water, stir well, and cover. Allow the drink to sit for about 15 to 20 minutes to form a soft gelatin.

For food safety, refrigerate any unconsumed chia seed water; the seeds can sprout if left at room temperature. You can store the chia drink mixture in your refrigerator for up to a week. You can also add the gel to smoothies and yogurts for a nutrient boost and to create a thicker, more satisfying, healthy treat.

You can use flavored water instead of plain, add lemon, or add more or fewer chia seeds to change the consistency.

Other Ways to Enjoy Chia Seeds

It is easy to incorporate chia seeds into your diet. Sprinkle 1 or 2 tablespoons into your favorite yogurt or cereal. Or add the seeds to smoothies, soups, or pancake and waffle mixes, and enjoy.

Another popular way to add chia seeds to your diet is to make chia seed pudding.

A simple chia pudding can be made with 2 tablespoons of chia seeds and one-half cup of any type of milk (including nondairy milk). Place the ingredients in a container with a lid. Close the container tightly and shake well. Wait 10 minutes and shake again until there are no clumps. Refrigerate for 15 minutes or longer and enjoy.

Precautions for Using Chia Seed Water

There is no guidance on whether you can drink chia seed water every day. However, chia seeds are healthy for most people to consume.

You might consider using a smaller amount of chia seeds to start—perhaps 1 tablespoon. Chia seeds provide a lot of fiber, and you will want to increase your fiber slowly. Adding too much can lead to bloating, gas, and constipation.

Drinking plenty of water when adding chia seeds to your diet is also essential. You may become constipated if you eat a lot of fiber and do not consume enough water.

Allergies to chia seeds are rare but not unheard-of. If you have a nut or seed allergy, confirm with your healthcare provider whether consuming chia seeds is safe.

You should also check with your healthcare provider before trying chia seed water if any of the following applies to you:

- If you have had a stroke, have high blood pressure, or take blood-thinning

medications: High concentrations of omega-3s can thin the blood further.

- If you have a gastrointestinal tract disorder (e.g., inflammatory bowel disease or diverticulitis): Chia seeds contain high amounts of indigestible fiber, which could exacerbate your digestive troubles.
- If you take medications to manage diabetes or high blood pressure: Chia seeds may affect how these medications work.

If you are using chia seed water to help with weight loss, do not use it in place of a healthy, balanced diet. Ensure you are eating various minimally processed and nutrient-dense foods to sustain your weight loss efforts.

Summary

Chia seed water is made by soaking chia seeds in water to create a gel-like beverage. Chia seeds are tiny black and white seeds known for being nutrient-rich with fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, protein, essential minerals, and antioxidants.

Some benefits of drinking chia seed water include better digestion, reduced inflammation, enhanced heart and bone health, and improved blood sugar and blood pressure levels. Chia seed water may also lower hunger and support weight loss goals. More research is needed to confirm many of these purported effects.

You can mix your chia seeds in water, add them to your yogurt or smoothie, or use them in a recipe. You can even use chia seeds to make a simple, delicious chia pudding.

Chia seed water is high in fiber, and too much of it could lead to digestive troubles. Staying hydrated can reduce stomach issues.

If you have health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, a gastrointestinal disorder, or an allergy to nuts or seeds, talk to your healthcare provider before adding chia seed water to your diet.

Do not replace other nutritious foods with chia seed water. Instead, aim to consume a variety of minimally processed, nutrient-rich foods.

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