

# Health Benefits of Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are the tiny seeds of the *Salvia hispanica* L. plant. Though they've been used as food for thousands of years by Native people, they've become increasingly popular in the U.S. over the past decade as more people learn of their impressive nutrition profile and potential health benefits.

Not only are chia seeds rich in important nutrients like fiber and magnesium, but chia seed intake has been shown to promote a healthy heart, reduce blood sugar levels, and support digestive health.

Here are the health benefits of chia seeds and their nutrition, potential risks, and culinary uses.

## May Lower Heart Disease Risk Factors

Chia seeds are an excellent source of nutrients known to promote heart health, including fiber, healthy fats, and magnesium. Studies show that eating chia seeds is an effective way to reduce heart disease risk factors such as high LDL or “bad” cholesterol levels and high blood pressure.

Chia seeds are rich in soluble fiber, which can help reduce cholesterol levels. Fiber helps decrease cholesterol absorption in the digestive tract and increases its excretion, thus lowering blood cholesterol levels.

## An Excellent Source of Fiber

Chia seeds are packed with fiber. In fact, the fiber content of chia seeds exceeds that of dried fruits, nuts, flaxseeds, and grains.

A 1-ounce serving of chia seeds provides an impressive 9.75 grams of fiber, which covers around 35% of your daily fiber needs. Fiber is essential for the health of the digestive system, as fiber is needed to promote regular and comfortable bowel movements and helps support the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut.

Chia fiber helps add bulk to stools, which can help prevent and treat constipation.

Chia seeds also contain antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds, like omega-3 fats and polyphenols, which help reduce intestinal inflammation. They're also high in minerals that are commonly low in people with digestive disorders like IBD, such as calcium, selenium, and zinc.

### **May Help Promote Healthy Blood Sugar**

Chia seeds are high in nutrients known to support healthy blood sugar regulation, such as fiber, protein, and magnesium.

Studies have linked chia seed consumption to improvements in glycemic control and insulin sensitivity in healthy people and in those with high blood sugar. A 2018 systemic review and meta-analysis that included 12 studies investigating the effects of chia seed consumption in people with and without diabetes found that, when consumed in high doses, chia seeds helped reduce blood sugar and insulin levels.

### **Nutritional Facts of Chia Seeds**

Though chia seeds are small in size, they contain a surprising amount of nutrients.

Here's the nutrition breakdown for a 1-ounce (28 g) serving of chia seeds:<sup>5</sup>

**Calories:** 138

**Protein:** 4.86 g

**Fat:** 8.7 g

**Carbohydrates:** 11.9 g

**Fiber:** 9.75 g

**Calcium:** 179 milligrams (mg) or 14% of the Daily Value (DV)

**Iron:** 2.19 mg or 12% of the DV

**Magnesium:** 95 mg or 23% of the DV

**Manganese:** .771 mg or 34% of the DV

**Phosphorus:** 244 mg or 20% of the DV

**Zinc:** 1.3 mg or 12% of the DV

### Risks of Eating Chia Seeds

When eaten in moderation, chia seeds are safe to consume and aren't associated with adverse side effects.

However, because chia seeds are very high in fiber, they may cause digestive symptoms, like diarrhea.

If you're currently following a diet low in fiber, it's best to slowly increase your intake of high-fiber foods, like chia seeds, and make sure you're drinking adequate amounts of water.

### Reference:

[https://www.health.com/chia-seeds-](https://www.health.com/chia-seeds-8357558#:~:text=Chia%20seeds%20are%20an%20excellent,levels%20and%20high%20blood%20pressure.)

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