

Cha, Cha Chia Pudding!

Anyone else have childhood memories of chia pets?

I remember spreading chia seeds on the back of a little clay animal, watering them daily and placing them in the sun to watch the chia sprout and grow. Little did anyone know back then what a powerhouse of nutrients those little seeds possess!

Chia seeds are a fabulous source of Omega 3 fatty acids, anti-oxidants and fiber. According to WebMD, an ounce of chia seeds (about 2 tablespoons) contains 138 calories, 10 grams of fiber, 9 grams of fat and 5 grams of protein, and 17 percent of your daily calcium needs, 12 percent of your iron and 23 percent of your magnesium.

Chia seeds are now readily available in supermarkets (I recently bought a nice size bag of Organic chia seeds at Costco) and there are a plethora of creative recipes on-line. They can be added to smoothies, baked into muffins, bread or cookies, or sprinkled onto granola or other cereals and made into pudding.

My favorite recipe is for Chia Pudding. Loved by both children and adults, it is super easy to prepare and is a yummy snack, dessert or breakfast. I often recommend this to my pregnant patients that are looking to increase their omega fatty acids (great for brain health in mom & growing baby) and have a tendency to get a little constipated. A single one-ounce serving contains 5 grams of omega-3, and the seeds do not need to be ground like flax seeds. Here is a base pudding recipe and there are infinite adaptations possible!

Chia Pudding Recipe

2 cups almond milk (can also use coconut, soy or another type of milk)

½ cup chia seeds

2 TBS maple syrup, honey or agave

¼ tsp. vanilla

Add all ingredients in a bowl and blend well with a whisk. Cover and place in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Stir well before serving. The pudding will keep for up to 5 days covered in the refrigerator.

Other options

Add a pinch of cinnamon, cardamom and/or dried ginger for a chai type of taste
Add ¼ tsp. orange zest or a drop of food-grade orange essential oil for an orange crème cycle flavor

Add ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder and/or chocolate chips for a decadent dessert

Top with fresh berries, nuts, coconut flakes or cooked fruit compote