Cilantro healing properties and recipes

By: Dr. Alyssa Musgrove

Sometimes called Chinese or Mexican parsley, cilantro is both an herb and a spice.

The plant bears aromatic seeds, coriander seeds, as well as the common green leaf used to enhance flavor in a food dish. But cilantro isn’t just good for spicing up your favorite meal, it provides many health benefits, as well.

Cilantro has been proven to have antifungal, antiseptic, antioxidant, disinfectant and antibacterial properties. It can help reduce swelling caused by arthritis and rheumatic diseases because of its polyphenol content. Cilantro helps dissolve cholesterol build up in the arteries, protecting you from heart disease. It is also a potent chelator, able to remove heavy metals and toxins from the body.

Cilantro has been used around the world for thousands of years to settle nausea, prevent gas and bloating, ease stomach cramps and relieve indigestion. Fresh cilantro often accompanies a spicy dish because of its cooling effects. Fresh cilantro blended with coconut oil can be used topically to soothe sunburn, poison ivy, dry skin and hives. It has natural antihistamines that help calm the immune system response against aggravating allergens.

Cilantro essential oil can also be used at home for anxiety and insomnia. Cilantro benefits your natural sleep cycle through its sedative effects and ability to calm nerves. A recent study published in the *Indian Journal of Pharmacology* found high levels of cilantro extract produce the same anti-anxiety effect as the drug Valium.

Cilantro is easy to grow at home. Buy organic seeds online and grow in containers at least 8-10 inches deep. It likes bright sun and thrives with some shade. Indoors, cilantro does best in east or southwest windows. It takes six to twelve weeks for cilantro to grow. You can plant small patches of the herb every two to three weeks throughout the growing season if you would like a steady supply. When the cilantro reaches 6 inches tall, it is time to harvest!

Keep in mind fresh cilantro leaves lose their pungent strength and health benefits when introduced to heat. It is best to add fresh chopped cilantro leaves just prior to serving a hot dish, whether it is hot in temperature or hot in spice level. For raw, cold preparations like guacamole and salsa, cilantro can be added at any point.

Fresh cilantro should be rinsed and then stored upright in a jar in the refrigerator with an inch or two of water in the bottom, and covered with a plastic bag. Remove any slimy or wilted leaves as they present, and your cilantro should remain beautiful and crisp for up to 10 days.

If you want to preserve your cilantro even longer you can prepare cilantro oil. Take one bunch of fresh cilantro and quickly blanch it by dipping it in boiling water, then pat dry. Put the cilantro into the blender, including the stems, add olive oil or ghee, and blend until smooth. Pour mixture into ice cube trays and freeze overnight. The following morning, remove the mixture from the trays and store in a bag or glass jar in the freezer for whenever you would like to boost your flavor and nutrient content while cooking.

Here are a few more delicious ways to incorporate cilantro into your diet:

**Super Cilantro Guacamole**

3 ripe avocadoes

1 tomato, chopped & gutted

¾ cup cilantro leaves, chopped

½ medium red onion, chopped

1 jalapeno without seeds, chopped

juice of one lime

1 tsp of each: garlic powder, cumin, smoked paprika

**Lime cilantro coleslaw recipe**

1 head purple cabbage

4 scallions, chopped

½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped

1 cup vegenaise

1½ tablespoon honey

6 tablespoons lime juice

sea salt & black pepper to taste

**Cilantro Salmon burgers**

12 ounces of cooked wild caught salmon or canned

3 minced garlic cloves

2 tablespoons minced green onion

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

3 eggs

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon mustard

¼ cup coconut flour or 1 tablespoon chia seeds

coconut oil for greasing pan

Directions:

1. In a bowl mix salmon, garlic, green onions and cilantro.
2. In a separate bowl combine eggs, lime juice, mustard, salt and pepper.
3. Combine both mixtures until well incorporated.
4. Add in coconut flour OR chia seeds and mix again.
5. Form four patties.
6. In a greased pan over medium heat, add patties.
7. Cook burgers until browned or reaches internal temperature of 145 degrees F and then flip (about 4 minutes on each side)