

Cilantro, sometimes referred to as Mexican or Chinese parsley, has a strong flavor that people usually love or hate. A member of the carrot family, cilantro is an ancient herb used frequently during Egyptian times. But in Mexican cuisine, cilantro is one of the distinctive and popular herbs to use in guacamole, salsas and sauces.

Cilantro is rich in beneficial phytonutrients, flavonoids and active phenolic acid compounds, which may be responsible for many of its health benefits. Cilantro, and its seeds, have been found to help control blood sugar, lower cholesterol and fight inflammation and free radicals. Cilantro may also have antimicrobial properties.

In other studies, cilantro may help chelate (remove) heavy metals like mercury, aluminum, and lead from the body. In fact, it is believed to cross the blood-brain barrier and actually remove said metals from the brain. Heavy metal chelation however, must be done under the guidance of a qualified practitioner.

The contention that cilantro is a powerful chelation agent is based on the research of Dr. Yoshiaki Omura, President and Founder of the International College of Acupuncture & Electro-Therapeutics and Director of Medical Research of the Heart Disease Research Foundation.

In 1995, Omura observed that subjects had higher than normal levels of mercury in their urine after consuming Vietnamese soup, which has large amounts of cilantro (also called "Chinese parsley"). He followed up on this accidental finding and discovered that giving cilantro to patients with mercury poisoning for several weeks successfully eliminated the toxin from the body. An abstract of Omura's research is available on www.pubmed.com.

Almonds are one of the healthiest things you can eat; they are loaded with beneficial antioxidants, contain heart healthy monounsaturated fats and Vitamin E, and are an excellent protein snack; a quarter cup of almonds contains more protein than an egg.

A cousin of peaches, plums, and apricots, the almond is our oldest cultivated nut. Wild almonds were found in excavated Greek archaeological sites dating from 8000 B.C. For as long as they have been around, the almond has maintained its superiority to other nuts nutritionally speaking. They help restore, tone, and nurture while supporting the digestive tract and the nervous system. The almond is also the only nut that helps to mildly alkalize the system. The cyanide like substances found in almonds (also found in the pits of plums and other stone fruits) help give a feeling of well-being while also aiding in inhibiting some forms of cancer.

The phytonutrient phytosterol in almonds also support its anticancer activity as well as its ability to help lower cholesterol, promote weight loss, and lower the rise in blood sugar and insulin that occurs after eating. In one study, those who included almonds as a source of healthy fat in their diet lost more weight and body fat than those who didn't, even though those who didn't include almonds had less fat in their diets.

Almonds also contain loads of magnesium, a mineral of which most people don't get enough. Just 1/4 cup of almonds contains 24.7% of the recommended daily value of magnesium. Magnesium is important for just about every function of the human body, especially the heart.

The skin of the almond is also beneficial so don't remove them as they contain 20 powerful antioxidant flavanoids.

Resources:

www.healthdiaries.com

WHfoods.com

www. WebMD.com

Wood, Rebecca, *The New Whole Foods Encyclopedia*, Penguin, Arkana, ©1999