

Coriander and Cilantro

By Ann Gerhardt MD

March 2024

Coriander and cilantro come from the same plant, *Coriandrum sativa*. In the U.S., the leaves and stems are called cilantro, and the ground seeds are coriander. Cilantro contains more vitamins A, C and K and coriander contains more minerals, like magnesium, iron, zinc, potassium and selenium. For some people, both have a pleasing taste, but super-tasters, who dislike kale, broccoli and other bitter foods, find cilantro to be unpleasant. In cooking, cilantro is used in salsa, guacamole, chutney, curries, rice dishes and soups or as a garnish. Overcooked cilantro and ground coriander seeds lose their flavor quickly.

They both contain antioxidants, which, by reducing free radicals, **may** benefit inflammatory conditions, aging skin, dermatitis, heart and blood vessel health, blood pressure, blood sugar, cancer growth and resistance to infection. I say may, because most of the science was done in test tubes and animals, not humans. Cilantro may also help to rid the body of dangerous heavy metals.

Eating a lot of cilantro or coriander may cause excess gas, abdominal pain or cramps, allergy symptoms, vomiting or diarrhea. They contain oxalic acid, which might contribute to kidney stones. Cilantro leaves must be washed to rid them of possible bacterial contamination. Because cilantro is high in vitamin K, those taking blood thinners should not eat much of it. The rest of us should remember that Cilantro is another green, leafy vegetable with an interesting flavor, and as such we should consider including it in our diets.