



**ELITE**  
PERSONAL TRAINING & FITNESS SOLUTIONS

# HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## 11/20 - Chicken Soup

### Introduction

Chicken soup as a therapy can be traced back to the Roman empire. Preparing a bowl of chicken soup for sick loved ones has remained a widespread practice for centuries. With cold and flu season upon us, it's worth asking: does science support the benefit of chicken soup?



### What makes chicken soup so appealing?

The warmth of the broth and the rich, savory flavors of the chicken, vegetables and noodles make chicken soup a favorite home remedy. What gives the soup that distinctive taste is "umami"- the fifth category of taste sensations, along with sweet, salty, sour and bitter. It is often described as having a "meaty or savory" taste.

### Chicken soup can improve appetite and aid digestion.

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, and the amino acid glutamate is found in foods with the umami taste. Studies show that taste is critical to the healing properties of chicken soup. People with upper respiratory illnesses tend to eat less. This is because acute illnesses ignite an inflammatory response that decreases appetite. Not feeling like eating means you're unlikely to get the nutrition you need - hardly an optimal recipe for immune health and recovery from illness!

Chicken Soup  
is  
Good Medicine.



Evidence suggests that the umami taste in chicken soup may help spur a bigger appetite. Participants in one study said they felt hungrier after their first taste of a soup with umami flavor added in by researchers. Other studies say umami may also improve nutrient digestion. Once our brains sense umami through the taste receptors on our tongues, our bodies prime our digestive tracts to absorb protein more easily.

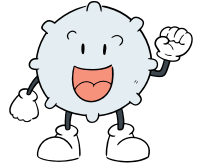


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## Chicken soup helps inflammation and stuffy nose.

Inflammation is part of the body's natural response to injury or illness. It occurs when white blood cells migrate to inflamed tissue to assist with healing. When this inflammatory process occurs in the upper airway, it results in common cold and flu symptoms, such as a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, coughing and thickened mucus.



Conversely, lower white blood cell activity in the nasal passages can reduce inflammation. Research shows that chicken soup can lower the number of white blood cells traveling to inflamed tissues. It does this by directly inhibiting the ability of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell, to travel to the inflamed tissue.



## Key ingredients

To understand the soothing and healing effects of chicken soup, it's important to consider the ingredients. Not all chicken soups are packed with nutrition. The ultra-processed canned versions of chicken soup lack many of the antioxidants found in homemade versions. Most canned versions of chicken soup are nearly devoid of hearty vegetables.



The nutrients in homemade soup are what set it apart from canned versions. Chicken provides the body with a complete source of protein to combat infection. Vegetables supply a wide array of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Noodles provide an easily digestible source of carbohydrate that your body uses for energy and recovery.

Even the warmth of chicken soup can help. Drinking the liquid and inhaling the vapors increase the temperature of nasal and respiratory passages, which loosens the thick mucus that often accompanies respiratory illnesses. Compared with hot water alone, studies show chicken soup is more effective at loosening mucus. Various herbs and spices used in chicken soup, such as pepper and garlic, also loosen mucus. The broth, which contains water and electrolytes, helps with rehydration.



## EPT Tip

To maximize the health benefits of chicken soup, EPT recommends the homemade variety, which can be prepared with carrots, celery, onion, spinach, fresh garlic, herbs and spices, to name a few ingredients. If you need a more convenient option, look at the nutrition facts label, and choose soups with a variety of vegetables over an ultra-processed, high-sodium, nutrient-depleted versions. Also, watch out for outrageous sodium levels in many of the canned chicken noodle soups.



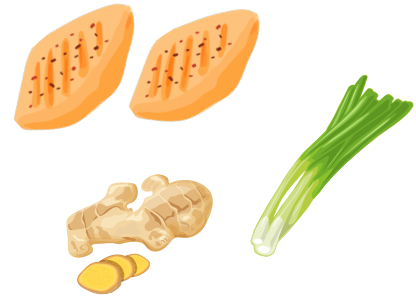
In summary, the latest science suggests that chicken soup – though not an out-and-out cure for colds and flu – really can help with healing. Looks like Grandma was right again.



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## Healthy Homemade Chicken Soup Recipe

1. Take 2 pieces of boneless organic chicken breast halves.
2. Cut 1 green onion stalk into 3 pieces and one piece of ginger into slices.
3. Place the above ingredients into a saucepan and add rice wine to taste.
4. Pour enough water to cover the meat. Bring to boil, then reduce to simmer.
5. Simmer covered for 15 minutes.



While simmering the chicken, start to dice the following vegetables into cubes:

- 2 celery stalks
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 2-3 shitake mushrooms



1. When the 15-minute simmering ends, transfer the cooked chicken into a soup pot, and strain the soup from the saucepan into the pot. If you prefer additional broth, pour more water into the pot.
2. Shred the chicken and put it into the soup pot.
3. Bring the soup to a boil, then add all the vegetable cubes to the pot.
4. Cover the pot, turn the heat to a simmer, and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Add white pepper, garlic powder, sea salt, and ground turmeric.
6. Wait for 1 more minute.



You can increase the vegetable content and add spinach to make this soup even more nutrient dense.



**Now, the homemade hot chicken soup is ready to make you feel better and warm your spirit!**

### **What Makes This Chicken Soup So Healthy?**

- Allicin, the active ingredient in garlic, inhibits RNA synthesis of pathogens and reduces inflammatory reactions.
- Phenolic compounds, the active ingredient in ginger, can ease inflammation and prevent DNA damage that may lead to cancer.
- Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, is a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent that can boost the body's immune system.



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- N-acetylcysteine in chicken soup strengthens immunity and helps thin and expel mucus buildup to alleviate symptoms.
- Carrots, celery, mushroom, and onion contain several antioxidants and minerals that help maintain an overall healthy condition for a speedy recovery.
- Proteins in the soup provide the building blocks for producing antibodies that your body's immune system needs to fight respiratory infections.



## References

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## Additional Articles of Interest:

[Chicken Soup Study | Newsroom | University of Nebraska Medical Center \(unmc.edu\)](#)

[Chicken Soup Uses, Benefits & Dosage - Drugs.com Herbal Database](#)

[Chicken Soup for the Respiratory System · Health Blog · Community Care Physicians](#)

[Is Chicken Soup Really Good for the Common Cold? | Office for Science and Society - McGill University](#)

[New Study Supports Chicken Soup as A Cold Remedy | ScienceDaily](#)

[The Universal Panacea: Chicken Soup - The American Journal of Medicine \(amjmed.com\)](#)

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