Bone Broth benefits and how to make it

By: Dr. Alyssa Musgrove

Bone broth dates back to the Stone Age, when it was cooked in turtle shells over the fire to promote healing. Now, this ancient food is experiencing a 21st century resurgence, thanks to its many health benefits – including protecting joints, promoting gut health, supporting the immune system, fighting cold symptoms and maintaining healthy skin.

Bone broth businesses can now be found in health-conscious cities across America. Medea’s Real Food Café in Arden, NC sells bone broth from local bones, served hot in house or available frozen to take home. In New York City, there is a bone broth subscription service called Bone Deep & Harmony and a restaurant called Brodo where they serve warm broth by the cup with numerous add ins for nutritional boosts.

Former Los Angeles Lakers NBA player Kobe Bryant is among many top-level athletes who swear by bone broth to keep their body in tip-top shape. Bryant reports, “I’ve been having bone broth as a pre-game meal for a while now. I find it is great for my energy and inflammation!”

So, how exactly does drinking bone broth improve our overall health?

As we age, our cartilage diminishes and joints experience natural wear and tear. The result is a decrease in flexibility and sometimes pain. Bone broth is an excellent source of natural collagen, glucosamines and amino acids that assist the human body in forming connective tissue that covers our bony structures and seals the protective lining of our gastrointestinal tract. As bone broth simmers, the collagen from the animal bones leaches into the broth and becomes easily absorbable. Consuming these nutrients helps restore and support aging joints. Collagen also helps maintain skin’s youthful tone by reducing the visible signs of wrinkles. The amino acids assist digestion by helping the production of bile salts and regulating the secretion of gastric acids.

You’ve likely heard the old adage that chicken soup will help cure a cold. As it turns out, there is scientific proof to support that claim. According to medical doctor and UCLA professor Irwin Ziment, bone broth naturally contains the amino acid cysteine, which chemically resembles the bronchitis drug acetylcysteine. In 2000, the official journal of the American College of Chest Physicians studied bone broth and found it helpful in clearing mucus, opening respiratory pathways and providing anti-inflammatory benefits. Drinking homemade bone broth during cold and flu season can help speed recuperation and relieve symptoms.

Bone broth is low in calories and high in minerals, making it a great addition to a healthy lifestyle. Homemade bone broth is the most nutrient dense, and simple to make. Since you are extracting minerals from bones and drinking them in concentrated form, be sure the animal source is as healthy as possible. Only use high-quality bones from grass-fed cattle, bison, lamb, pastured poultry, wild caught fish or locally hunted deer. There are several places to find good bones for stock from local butchers and farmers. You can save leftovers when you roast chicken, duck, goose or this year’s Thanksgiving turkey. There are also online companies that sell high-quality bones for good prices, such as Tropical Traditions, US Wellness Meats and Thrive Market.

**Broth ingredients:**

-2 pounds or more of bones from a healthy source

-2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

-3 celery stalks, chopped

-2 carrots, chopped

-1 onion, quartered

-sea salt

**Instructions:**

-If you are using raw bones (especially beef bones) I have found it improves the flavor to roast them in the oven before boiling them. Place bones on a pan and roast for 30 minutes at 400 degrees.

-Place bones in a large stockpot or crockpot. Cover with filtered water and 2 tablespoons of vinegar.

-Let bones sit for 30 minutes in the cool water with the vinegar to leach the minerals out of the bones. (The acid in the vinegar makes the nutrients from the bones more available.)

-Add vegetables to the pot and turn on the heat. Bring broth to a boil, then cover and simmer for 8 to 48 hours. If you have to leave home while it is cooking, a crockpot is recommended. Set it on low for 12-24 hours.

-Skim the “scum” (frothy/foamy layer) with a big spoon as it simmers the first few hours.

-Remove from heat and let the broth cool slightly, strain it to remove the bits of bones and vegetables.

-Store in glass jars in the fridge (up to a week) or freezer (up to 6 months).

-Drink the broth like a hot cup of tea. You can add sea salt or cayenne pepper for additional flavor, or use in soups or stews.

-Consume eight ounces daily upon waking or before bed as a health boost. Some restaurants whisk in an egg until cooked as a soup.

Fill your mug this fall with a savory bone broth, and reap the benefit of valuable nutrients that will nourish your body throughout the winter season.