

Dear Maria

Why is Chicken Soup a remedy for colds and flu?

The first authoritative endorsement of chicken soup according to author Jean Carter of “The Food Pharmacy” comes from the eminent 12<sup>th</sup> century physician, Moses Maimonides. The story goes when Sultan Saladin, a mighty Muslim military leader, begged Maimonides for a cure for his son’s asthma, Maimonides prescribed chicken soup!

Dr Irwin Ziment MD, professor of Medicine at UCLA maintained that chicken like most protein foods contains a natural amino acid called cysteine, which is released when you make the soup. Cysteine bears a chemical similarity to a drug called acetylcysteine which is prescribed for patients with bronchitis and respiratory infections. What is of interest is that acetylcysteine was originally derived from chicken feathers and skin. In terms of Pharmacology, acetylcysteine is a mucokinetic which thins down mucus in the lungs, making it easier to expel. Furthermore, following rigorous lab tests, Dr Stephen Rennard MD, University of Nebraska Medical Centre found that chicken soup actually blocked migration of white cells called neutrophils that lead to inflammation and cold symptoms. He said that chicken soup was so therapeutically potent that it worked even when diluted two hundred times! Also, the soup appears to have anti-inflammatory properties making it an excellent remedy for asthma as Maimonides postulated nine centuries ago!

Take an uncooked chicken, rinsed, leaving skin and feathers around joints and wings. In a large pan, cover with water and some, 8 cloves of garlic, carrot, some celery, small leek, two leaves of green cabbage, onion, black pepper, two handfuls of Dill weed, and parsley. Cover and cook gently until everything is soft and chicken falls off the bone. You can puree the lot and sip slowly throughout the day when unwell. Otherwise it can be frozen and daily defrosted as needed.

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