

Chicken Soup Cures the Common Cold: Fact or Fiction

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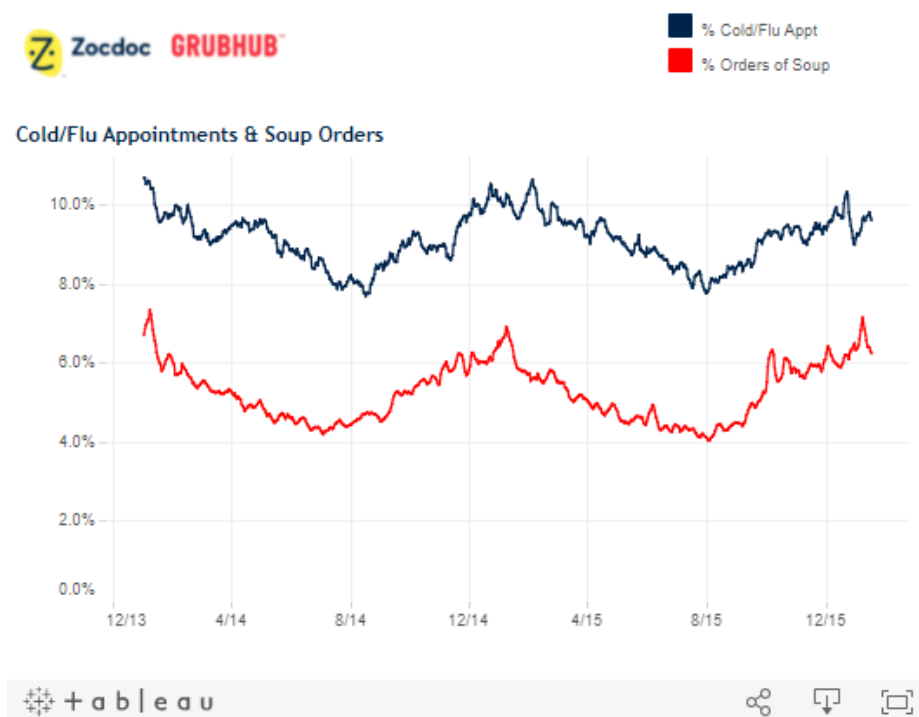
It is called Caldo de Pollo in Mexico, Tori Paitan in Japan, and Consomme in France; these are a few of the names given to Chicken Soup in other countries. Every culture has a version of this hot golden liquid, and whether it comes with avocado, noodles, matzo balls, or served as a clear broth for those that believe in its curative powers, it is a magical elixir. Some believe that Moses received the original recipe on Mount Sinai with the 10 Commandments. Chicken soup is traditional, with recipes passed down from mother to daughter. My Grandmother called it "Jewish penicillin," but can it cure the common cold?

Early archaeological evidence of chicken soup dates back to the discovery of boiling water and as a therapeutic dish back to Chinese antiquity, with different herbs, added to cure various diseases. During the second century AD, the addition of noodles (aka lamian) signified long life and the family's well-being in China. In Europe, chicken soup as a curative dates back to the second century AD when the Greek physician Galen recommended it as a remedy for migraines, leprosy, constipation, and fever. During the Middle Ages, the Jewish philosopher and physician Moses Maimonides recommended chicken soup for the weak and sick. In the 15th century, Sephardic Jews gave "Caldo de gayina vieja" (old hen chicken broth) to women who had just given birth.

There have been studies on which chicken soup properties ease cold symptoms in recent years. For example, a study by Kiumars Saketkhoo, MD, et al. examined the effects of chicken soup on nasal mucus velocity in 15 normal subjects. They found a significant increase in nasal mucus viscosity 5 minutes after ingesting the soup. It means that chicken soup makes noses run because it dilates the blood vessels causing increased blood flow, allowing the mucus to flush out sinuses. It is essential to stay hydrated during a cold, and a warm, soothing liquid is an excellent

source of hydration and relieves sore throat pain. In addition, studies suggest chicken is rich in carnosine, which can lessen the feeling of congestion in the nose and throat and minimize inflammation in the respiratory system. However, the effects are temporary, lasting only while the soup remains in the body. Chicken bones release gelatin, glucosamine, and chondroitin into the broth, reducing inflammation, relaxing the muscles, and soothing the discomforts of cold symptoms. Chickens are high in tryptophan which helps the body produce serotonin, a mood enhancer giving a feeling of comfort and well-being. The vegetables used in making chicken soup contain antioxidants, minerals, and vitamins C and K to help fight the cold by bolstering the immune system. Even the steam from the boiling soup works as a vaporizer to open airways, making breathing easier.

A study of doctors' appointments made through ZocDoc (a service matching doctors and patients) and GrubHub (a food delivery service) found a correlation between an increase in cold and flu-related appointments and online orders for soup.



When ZocDoc had its most significant spikes in cold and flu-related online appointment bookings in 2014 and 2015 (15 percent above the weekly average), GrubHub also saw a 22 percent increase in overall soup orders at the same time. So, the results show that when people have a cold or the flu, they look for something hot and comforting, like chicken soup to eat.

Even with all this information, can chicken soup cure the common cold? No, a cold is a virus of the nose and throat that people recover from in around ten days. No doctor visit is required. Today's cold medications mimic the symptom relief of chicken soup, but it is still temporary relief and not a cure. Finally, even though chicken soup is not a cold cure, you always feel better when you eat/drink it because someone loved you enough to make it for you.

Conclusion: Fiction

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