

# Eat Right Boston

Nutrition and Wellness Newsletter for Healthy Living

Fall 2015



## Potassium Lowers Blood Pressure

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) regards potassium as a “nutrient of concern” because many Americans get too little of it. They suggest 4,700 milligrams a day; preferably from food sources. Researchers know that potassium helps to lower blood pressure. A study in the April 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the 2013 British Medical Journal publication noted systolic pressure was reduced by 7 mm Hg with a diet that averaged between 3500-4700 milligrams of potassium. They also noted that this potassium level reduced the risk of stroke by 24%, as well.

This study demonstrated that there was no adverse effect on renal function in adults, but the mineral remains restricted to people with acute or chronic kidney disease. Adding more potassium to one’s diet should always be physician approved as some medications cause the kidneys to retain potassium.

Potassium-rich foods that contain over 400 milligrams per serving include: white and sweet potatoes with skin, beet greens, Swiss chard, acorn squash, spinach, broccoli, bananas; clams, halibut, yellowfin tuna, and wild and farmed salmon. While dried apricots, prunes, cantaloupe, avocado, and milk average 350 milligrams per serving.



## Happy Fall!

*As much as I hate to see the summer go by, I am looking forward to the cool, crisp days of the fall. I'm happy to say I found a few shards of sea glass to add to my colorful collection!*

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With evidence mounting, the American Heart Association is endorsing getting more potassium in one’s diet. (See the DASH diet that follows on page 2).

## DASH Away, All!

Several years ago I was asked to be the technical reviewer for *The Complete Idiot's Guide to DASH Diet Cooking*. There are lots of books out there on this government-endorsed eating plan; different versions but the information is similar. In January 2015, the US News & World Report chose the DASH diet as the Best Overall Diet, as well as for: Heart Health, Diabetes, Healthy Eating, Easy to Follow, Nutrition, and Safety. So, I thought it was a good topic to revisit.



The DASH acronym stands for *Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension*. It was developed in the 1990's by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a means to help lower blood pressure, and by happenstance has become a medically endorsed prescription to promote good health. It is low in saturated and trans fats, and also restricts sodium to less than 2300 milligrams a day; 1500 milligrams for those with existing high blood pressure or kidney disease.

The plan focuses on nutrient-dense, whole foods that provide significant dietary sources of the minerals: potassium, magnesium, and calcium. The premise of the diet is that these minerals help the kidneys function more

efficiently. Potassium, specifically, helps to promote sodium excretion. And less sodium keeps pressure in the blood vessels down, allowing them to relax. Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries. The medical term for high blood pressure is *hypertension*. It increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and if left untreated can lead to kidney disease.

The group of researchers that started the diet began by looking at the statistical data in populations that did not have high blood pressure. Many were vegetarians, but not all. Their diets consisted of fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts and whole grains; they ate little refined sugars and red meats. From there, the researchers designed the general outlines of the DASH diet, which unlike other "diets," is not restrictive. Rather, it is inclusive of **all** of the major food groups. It makes suggestions for the servings per group based on ones calorie needs. For example, if you are allowed 2,000 calories a day it recommends: 4 to 5 daily servings of vegetables; 4 to 5 servings of fruits; 2 to 3 servings of low-fat or nonfat dairy products; 6-8 servings of whole grain products; 2-3 servings fats (non-tropical oils), and less than 6 servings of meats/poultry/fish. You're also allowed 4 to 5 small servings of nuts, beans, or seeds/week, and less than 5 servings of sugary foods/week.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) suggest 4,700 milligrams a day; preferably from food sources. The DASH diet is one of the few diets that manages to reach this goal. The same holds true for calcium. The general recommendation for calcium is 1000-1300 milligrams/day; depending on your age. An 8-ounce serving of milk provides 300 milligrams. So, following the DASH recommendations, better meets your daily needs for calcium without the need for added supplements.

Physical activity and weight management are also important parts of a heart healthy lifestyle and are DGA goals. If you need to lose weight, combine DASH with a regular physical activity program, such as walking or swimming.

More information on the DASH diet can be found at:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash>

# Bone Up on Bone Broth!

With the winter months approaching (ugh), soups, stews, and casseroles return to menu plans, but before you reach for that can of soup in your pantry, listen up on a new trend in slow-cooked broth. While it is gaining in popularity now, its genesis goes back centuries!



Just as it sounds, bone broth is made from boiling the bones or meat from poultry, beef, lamb, or fish over a long period of time; up to three days (yup!). It's rich in nutrients and professes to promote bone and digestive health, glowing skin, and boost the immune system. It provides many of the minerals naturally found in bones that include calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium in a form that your body can absorb more easily than vitamin supplements.

Animal bones are rich in collagen, a protein that breaks down during slow-cooking to form gelatin. The gelatin protects the mucosal lining of the digestive tract and may help in leaky gut syndrome. Collagen is a protein that also gives skin firmness and elasticity, and helps to build healthy hair and nails, as well.

Bone broth also contains glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, which help to decrease joint pain and inflammation. The broth is also rich in two amino acids, glycine and proline, that may play a role in liver and cardiac health, as well as muscle repair and blood sugar control.

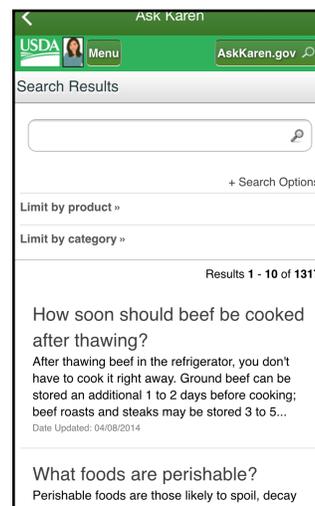
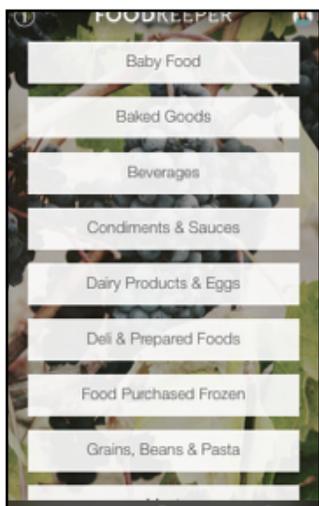
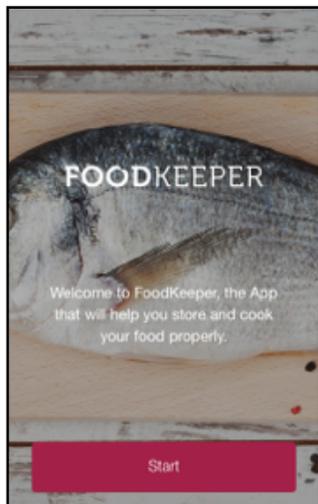
Bone broth is easy to make. Add the animal/fish bones to a big pot or a crock-pot. Cover it with water, and add vegetables and seasonings for flavor. Let it simmer from 6 to 40 hours. The longer you cook it, the better it tastes, and the more nutrient-rich it becomes. Roasting the bones and vegetables beforehand also adds good flavor. The broth can also serve as a base for stews and gravies.

Watch out Starbucks! According to NYC dietitian, Alix Turoff, RD of Top Balance Nutrition, bone broth is “the new green juice in NYC. People will pay a lot of money for it, sometimes without knowing what the benefits really are.” She has visited the take out window at Brodo, where they serve up bone broth and/or bone broth soups in coffee cups that cost any where from \$4.75 to \$17.00. According to Turoff, “you can choose from a variety of "add-ins" including bone marrow, calabrian chili oil, or fermented beet juice.” I imagine it hits the spot of a blustery day, and let's face it, nothing beats a cup of steamy soup when you are under the weather.

And yes, this is a picture of *my* homemade broth. Time for me to hit the butcher store!



# FoodKeeper Phone App is a Keeper!



There are too many apps to keep track of but I found one put out by the US Department of Agriculture called *FoodKeeper* that I really like. It contains sound, valuable information to keep kitchens in a safe zone; both for storage and for cooking temperatures. It's much handier than searching online, especially with holiday cooking fast approaching. I especially like the "Ask Karen" button in the right hand corner that directs you to a search prompt; or you can submit your own question directly. And the nice part is that the app is FREE!



## Sipping on a Smoothie!

8 ounces of unsweetened almond milk  
1 scoop of natural vanilla-flavored Biochem Whey Protein Powder  
1/4 cup vanilla yogurt (regular or Greek); it adds a little more thickness to the shake, as well as live active cultures.  
1 teaspoon of chia seeds or 1Tbl ground flax seeds  
1/2 banana  
1/2 cup of fresh or frozen fruit; like berries

**DIRECTIONS:** Blend and go!

**High in protein and fiber.**

**Great for snacking.**

**And for blowing bubbles!**

If you don't want to use a protein powder, use 1 cup non- or low fat, plain Greek yogurt for a good protein source, instead. If you don't like plain, try vanilla.

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