

Dry-cured ham bones—a source of heart-healthy peptides?

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Credit: ACS

Drinking bone broth is a recent diet fad that proponents claim fights inflammation, eases joint pain and promotes gut health. Simmering animal bones in water releases collagen and other proteins into the broth that may have health benefits, although more research is needed to validate these claims. Now, a new study in ACS' *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* has shown that ham bones contain peptides that could have cardioprotective effects.

During cooking and digestion, proteins from [animal bones](#) can be broken down into smaller pieces, or peptides, that have different properties than the intact protein. For example, some peptides from collagen act as antioxidants or inhibitors of disease-related enzymes.

To see if Spanish dry-cured ham bones could be a source of beneficial peptides, Leticia Mora and colleagues ground up the bones and simulated conditions of cooking and human digestion. Then, they examined whether the bone samples could block the activities of several enzymes involved in cardiovascular disease.

The researchers found that the bone peptides, most of which were derived from collagen and hemoglobin proteins, inhibited the enzymes even after heating and simulated digestion.

In fact, these treatments released additional bioactive peptides, suggesting that the use of ham bones to make broths and stews could have a positive impact on cardiovascular health.

More information: "Peptides with Potential Cardioprotective Effects Derived from Dry-Cured Ham Byproducts" *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (2019). pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.jafc.8b05888

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