

EGG YOURSELF ON TO BETTER HEALTH!

If you're over 25, you remember when eggs were good for you –then bad for you—and now, good for you again. Well, at least the experts finally got it right!

Eggs really are good for you. Really, really good. In fact, eggs are one of nature's most nutritious foods.



The “problem” with eggs started in the ‘70s when the American Heart Association stated that we should consume no more than 300 mg per day of dietary cholesterol and eat no more than 3-4 eggs per week, based on some unscientific observations and assumptions. Suddenly, doctors, nutritionists and fad-diet authors were telling people to avoid foods containing cholesterol, and eggs became their poster child for “bad” foods. They were well-intentioned...but they were wrong.

THE TRUTH ABOUT EGGS & CHOLESTEROL

- We need cholesterol for many bodily functions and our liver produces the blood cholesterol we need.
- There's a difference between dietary cholesterol (found in food) and blood cholesterol (found in your blood—your HDL & LDL). The cholesterol you eat does not appreciably increase your blood cholesterol.
- Research from the Harvard School of Public Health found no significant link between eating dietary cholesterol in eggs and developing heart disease in healthy individuals.
- The primary culprit for raising blood cholesterol, particularly LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, is trans fat (partially hydrogenated vegetable oil). There are no trans fats in eggs.

THE REAL SKINNY ON EGGS

At only 70 calories each, eggs are “Nutrient Dense” - a lot of nutrition for only a few calories! And they come in their own ‘portion-controlled’ packages.

- To start with, eggs contain the highest quality protein available in any food. Eggs are one of the few foods considered to be a complete protein source because they provide the nine essential amino acids that the body can't make—ones that must come from food. Eggs are the lowest cost food that supplies high-quality protein and a variety of important vitamins and minerals. Gram for gram of protein, eggs are half as expensive as chicken breasts!
- Protein is essential for building and repairing body tissue. Muscles, organs, skin, hair as well as antibodies, enzymes, and hormones are all made from protein.
- Did you know that you can't think without protein? That's right—all of the neurotransmitter signals your brain uses to communicate with the cells of your body are protein based.
- Most of the fats in egg yolk are the healthy, unsaturated kind—the type of fat that lowers “bad” LDL cholesterol.
- Eggs also provide a variety of essential nutrients including vitamins A, D, E, K and B12 plus Iron, Niacin, Riboflavin, Phosphorus, Zinc and Folate.
- Eggs also contain carotenoids, powerful antioxidant compounds that help prevent many diseases including cancer.

Eggs have been recognized as “functional foods” that have health benefits beyond basic nutritional content. (Lutein and Zeaxanthin are carotenoids, powerful antioxidants, and have been proven to promote healthy vision while preventing cataracts and macular degeneration, among other things.) So, what'll it be—two eggs or a donut for breakfast???

NOW, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ALL THESE NEW “DESIGNER” EGGS?

It used to be that an egg was an egg was an egg—but not anymore. Now you see a variety of eggs in the store with labels stating “Organic”, “Natural” and “Omega-3”. Many of these are brown-shelled eggs and they differ from regular eggs by the nutrient content of the feed the chickens eat.

So, are these new eggs really better for you? Apparently yes. It turns out, not surprisingly, that what a chicken eats has a significant effect on the nutrient content of their eggs. Feeding chickens an organic, vegetarian diet rich in vitamin E and flaxseed produces eggs that are high in vitamin E and omega-3 fatty acids and low in saturated fat. Omega-3's help create healthy, flexible cell membranes and are associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. Psychiatrists are even prescribing omega-3's for depression.

So pony up the eggs-tra dollar or so per dozen, if you can, and get an even more nutritious great deal!

EGGS—THE ORIGINAL “FAST FOOD”

What could be easier than boiling water? Well, the easiest and fastest way to prepare and eat eggs is to hard-boil* them. A great idea is to hard boil a bunch of eggs on Sunday and keep them in the fridge for quick weekday high protein mini-meals and snacks.

For most people, a “good” breakfast has been relegated to weekends only. We just don’t have time to prepare a healthy breakfast most days. But, breakfast is the most important meal of the day and it should include a good protein source.

Some suggestions for breakfast-skippers:

- Grab two hard cooked eggs, peel** them, cut them in half, sprinkle with salt, pepper or your favorite seasoning and you have a high protein, nutritious breakfast in two minutes. If you prefer your eggs warm, put the egg halves on a plate, cover with a paper towel and microwave for about 30 seconds.
- If you don’t have time for an ‘at-home’ breakfast, grab a couple of hard boiled eggs as you leave for work and enjoy them instead of a donut, or worse, when you get to the office. This high-protein, low-calorie mini meal will replenish the protein you’ve used rebuilding your cells during the night and will satisfy your appetite until lunch.

Eggs also make great snacks. Take two or three to work and you’ve got a great nutrient-dense snack for those hungry times during the day (but do keep them refrigerated).

*Hard-boiled eggs: place eggs in a saucepan, cover with water, heat till just boiling, then reduce heat to a simmer for about 20 minutes. Run eggs under cold water for a few minutes before peeling.

**Peeling hard-boiled eggs: crack the wide end of the egg, where the air pocket is, on the counter then roll the sides of the egg to crack them. Begin to peel the egg from the wide end and the shell should come off easily.

THE INCREDIBLE VERSATILE EGG

When you hard-boil your eggs on Sunday, leave a few uncooked in the fridge for other quick, delicious meals. So many egg dishes can be prepared so easily and with such amazing variety that they’re actually the best “fast food” available. Few foods are as easy to cook! Here are some other suggestions:

Eggs-cellent Egg Scramble Recipe

- Break eggs (two per serving) into a bowl. Add 1-2 tbs. water, salt and pepper or other seasonings, and blend with a whisk or a fork until slightly frothy.
- Add 2-3 tbs. olive oil to a non-stick fry pan (8-12” depending on number of servings), add a teaspoon or two of chopped garlic (buy it in a jar in your produce section), and heat to medium to gently cook the garlic. (The health benefits of garlic are tremendous, so whenever you can, include it).
- Additional ingredients can be added at this point (see suggestions to the right).
- Add eggs to skillet and cook to desired doneness, using a non-stick spatula or wooden spoon to gently stir and fluff eggs.

The bottom line is that eggs are an EGG-CELLENT, delicious, affordable, convenient and low calorie source of quality protein and nutrients.

CREATIVE SCRAMBLING

It’s not just scrambled eggs and bacon anymore. Have fun using your imagination to make eggs a more important and interesting part of your diet.

There are so many healthy ingredients that are compatible with eggs that all you need is a few minutes and a little creativity.

Consider “spicing” up your egg scrambles, for breakfast, lunch or dinner, with some of these ingredients you may already have in your kitchen:

- Veggies – throw a handful of whatever fresh or frozen chopped veggies you have on hand into the pan with the garlic to get an extra dose of powerful anti-oxidants into your diet. Frozen chopped spinach is particularly good, along with some sliced mushrooms, chopped onion and/or chopped tomato. Heat until just cooked then add eggs.
- Your favorite Hot Sauce – spicy food boosts your metabolism and can aid in weight loss. It’s also a healthy vasodilator and is a good de-toxifier.
- Low-fat cheese – your favorite kind (shredded), crumbled feta cheese, or a bit of plain or flavored cream cheese.
- Soy cheese – sliced or shredded Veggie Slices (many varieties available).
- Your favorite salsa – add as the eggs are cooking and top with low fat sour cream for Eggs Ole’!
- Marinara sauce & Italian seasonings – add to the scramble for Eggs Italiano! This may sound strange but, honestly, eggs and marinara sauce go great together. Also, it’s a great way to add the powerful anti-oxidant and anti-cancer compounds in cooked tomatoes to your day.
- Tomatoes, onions, green pepper and a bit of Ranch Dressing (low-fat, not fat-free) for the Great Western scramble
- Flavored Hummus – add a few teaspoons of Roasted Red Pepper or your favorite flavor for Persian Eggs
- Any leftovers will do, too – add cooked diced salmon, shrimp, chicken, ham, beef, or cooked vegetables plus some seasoning, cheese or even plain yogurt (adds a gourmet touch!)

Send us your favorite egg recipes or ideas and we’ll share them with everyone next time.