

Eggs Are Good for Your Cholesterol

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✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Eggs are considered one of the world's most perfect foods, but became a target based on the faulty premise of the medical establishment that eating too many yolks would drive up cholesterol
- › Chickens weren't regarded as much beyond egg production until a new concept featuring chicken as a main course took flight in the late '40s, based on the food industry's initiative to find more uses for chickens
- › Dense, small-particle LDL cholesterol in your body is a risk factor for heart disease risk, while large, fluffy LDL particles constitute a lower risk, but here's the kicker: Eggs convert small LDL particles to large particles
- › In the study, people with Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes ate 12, eight or two eggs per week for a year, after which a series of tests showed no negative health consequences whatsoever
- › The 113 milligrams of choline (nearly 25% of your Daily Reference Intake or DRI) is crucial for pregnant women, as it helps to prevent certain birth defects, including spina bifida, and support the brain development of unborn babies

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Chicken as the foundation of a delicious home-cooked meal has been an American mainstay for decades. Not centuries, you might ask? As a matter of fact, up until the

1920s, homesteaders filled chicken coops with chickens to fulfill one main purpose: to produce eggs.

Chickens weren't regarded as much beyond egg production until a new concept featuring chicken as a main course took flight in the late '40s. It was based, not surprisingly, on the food industry's initiative to find more uses for said chickens. Today we have a plethora of chicken recipes, from broth to casseroles to fried, not to mention nuggets. But what happened to eggs?

Eggs became a target based on the faulty premise of the medical establishment that eating too many yolks would drive up cholesterol and pack your carotid arteries with plaque. As recently as 2012, eggs were still being maligned and even deemed as health-damaging as smoking cigarettes, according to a Canadian journal.¹ Many still believe this, and it's the misinformation that's damaging health, not egg consumption.

According to a study² led by Nick Fuller at the University of Sydney, Australia, and published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, eggs, "despite conflicting evidence continuing around the world," are not responsible for heart disease or high cholesterol.

In fact, they're one of the most nutritious foods in your kitchen. When he led the first portion of the study, Fuller wrote that eggs can support several aspects of health, including eye, blood vessel and heart health, healthy pregnancies and fat regulation, noting:

"Despite being vilified for decades, dietary cholesterol is understood to be far less detrimental to health than scientists originally thought. The effect of cholesterol in our food on the level of cholesterol in our blood is actually quite small."³

No Matter How Many, Egg Intake Shows No Negative Results

The latest study notes that people with Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes ate a dozen eggs a week for a year, at which point a series of tests showed no negative results

whatsoever. Study participants consumed high (12), medium and low (two) eggs per week for the first three months. Times Now News explains:

*"This was aimed at maintaining optimal weight for the three months. In a bid to lose weight, the same members were asked to embark on a weight loss plan while consuming the same amount of eggs they were consuming earlier. For six months, the participants continued on their consumption of eggs while they were monitored by the researchers."*⁴

Prior to the study, Australian Men's Health observes, cardiovascular risk factors such as blood sugar and blood pressure levels were taken into account when the researchers gathered the results, as those are considered risk factors associated with egg consumption.

Interestingly, the study concluded that the 128 individuals in the study lost weight even on a high-egg diet and continued to lose when the study came to a close.

Backing up the study results, the Australian Heart Foundation notes that "Eggs can be included as part of a heart healthy eating pattern, and can be chosen as one of a variety of protein foods including fish and seafood, legumes, nuts and seeds, and poultry, in preference to unprocessed red meat."⁵ As for the cholesterol content:

*"Eggs don't altercate the LDL levels in blood. An egg contains only 212 mg of cholesterol which is lesser than even the half recommended dietary allowance of cholesterol for a day. Since the liver already produces a large amount of cholesterol every day, consumption of eggs balances the ratio with the liver's production. In fact, eggs increase the HDL or good cholesterol levels in your body."*⁶

Cholesterol in your blood known as LDL is narrowed down to two subtypes: dense, small particles and large, fluffy particles. The dense small-particle LDL type is what can be identified as a risk factor for increasing your heart disease risk, while people with large LDL particles have a lower risk, but here's the kicker: Eggs convert small LDL particles to large particles.⁷

Perception Is the Problem

One of the biggest problems in the discussion regarding saturated fats and cholesterol is that the medical community hasn't explained it to the public very well, probably because there's a lot of confusion on the part of this collective majority.

The fact is, even though it may raise cholesterol, your lipid profile may actually improve when you eat more saturated fat, especially when you cut the amount of carbohydrates you consume, according to Dr. Aseem Malhotra, an interventional cardiologist consultant at Croydon University Hospital in London.

Saturated fat not only increases your HDL, it also increases large, fluffy LDLs, which is what you want. On top of that, LDL has been grossly exaggerated as a risk factor for heart disease, with the exception of people who have a genetic abnormality. Malhotra notes:

"The mantra that saturated fat must be removed to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease has dominated dietary advice and guidelines for almost four decades. Yet scientific evidence shows that this advice has, paradoxically, increased our cardiovascular risks.

Furthermore, the government's obsession with levels of total cholesterol, which has led to the overmedication of millions of people with statins, has diverted our attention from the more egregious risk factor of atherogenic dyslipidaemia [elevated levels of triglycerides and small-dense LDL and low levels of HDL cholesterol]."⁸

Interestingly, many of the scientists who are noting the increase in egg consumption and its role in causing "high cholesterol" talk about saturated fat as if it's still an enemy. Body and Soul explains:

"The truth is that cholesterol is a very important part of the body – and an essential element to good health. It is a structural molecule that is an essential part of every single cell membrane.

It is used to make steroid hormones such as testosterone, (estrogen) and cortisol; helps your metabolism work efficiently; and produces bile acids, which helps the body digest fat and absorb important nutrients. The truth is, without cholesterol we wouldn't even exist."⁹

Reasons to Start (or Continue) Eating Eggs

Instead of focusing on the faulty science that made you worry unnecessarily about consuming too much cholesterol, there are numerous reasons to go ahead and enjoy them. They're loaded with vitamins and minerals; in fact, just one boiled egg imparts these very good-for-you nutrients, in terms of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI):

6% of the RDI in vitamin A	5% of the RDI in folate
7% of the RDI in vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)	9% of the RDI in vitamin B12
15% of the RDI in protein	15% of the RDI in vitamin B2
9% of the RDI in phosphorus	22% of the RDI in selenium

In addition, eggs contain a healthy amount of calcium, zinc and vitamins D, K, E and B6, as well as healthy fats. Lutein and zeaxanthin are important antioxidants that build up in the retinas of your eyes. This effectively protects your vision by inhibiting the development of cataracts and macular degradation, two of the world's most common and serious eye ailments.

Along with the high amounts of vitamin A, your vision is further defended with every egg you eat. Fuller reiterated that other nutritional advantages come through "micronutrients like carotenoids (for eye health), arginine (for healthy blood vessels) and folate (for healthy pregnancies and heart health)," according to the University's news release.¹⁰

Choline: Eggs Are a Main Source

One very important aspect of eggs is the rich source of choline – about 113 milligrams (mg) in a single egg, nearly 25% of your DRI – which is necessary for building cell wall membranes, producing the molecules crucial for brain signaling and to make the brain chemical acetylcholine, involved in storing memories.

It also helps prevent the buildup of homocysteine in your blood (linked to heart disease) and reduces chronic inflammation. Choline plays a crucial role in pregnant women, as it helps to prevent certain birth defects, including spina bifida and, again, is very important for the brain development of unborn babies.

According to a study published in the journal *Nutrients*, only 8% of U.S. adults are getting enough choline and only 8.5% of pregnant women are consuming adequate amounts.

Researchers added, "This research illustrates that it is extremely difficult to achieve the adequate intake for choline without consuming eggs or taking a dietary supplement."¹¹ Conversely, symptoms associated with low choline levels include memory problems, lethargy and brain fog. Because your body can only synthesize small amounts at a time, you need to get it from your diet on a regular basis.

Eggs: Not Just for Breakfast

Perhaps just as important as what eggs do for your health may be what eggs do for your food. Not just for breakfast, eggs are used to make everything from [healthy pancakes](#) to egg salad. *Incredible Egg*¹² notes five of the egg's top cooking functions; eggs:

- Bind ingredients in prepared foods like meatloaf and salmon patties
- Leaven baked "high-rises" such as soufflés and sponge cakes
- Emulsify mayonnaise, salad dressings and hollandaise sauce
- Clarify soups and thicken custards
- Add color, flavor, moisture and nutrients to baked goods

The good news is, some of the egg dishes you may have been avoiding, not to mention eggs by themselves, yolk and all, are back on the table. That said, it's important to understand that not any old egg is "good" for eating. Organic, pastured eggs are the best by far, as they're not produced in a CAFO, or concentrated animal feeding operation, which yields eggs far more likely to be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria such as Salmonella.

Everything you need to know about every aspect of egg production and what constitutes farm-fresh eggs can be found [right here](#). You'll note that the best way to eat your organic, pastured eggs is raw or very lightly cooked, such as poached, soft-boiled or over easy with very runny yolks. However, if you're looking for something a little different, here's a healthy, delicious recipe, inspired by Food.com:¹³

Sweet Potato and Spinach Frittata

Ingredients

- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 1/4 cups asiago cheese, shredded, divided
- 3/4 cup medium cheddar, shredded
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 cups sweet potatoes, peeled, diced
- 4 cups spinach, coarsely chopped

Procedure

1. Position oven rack 6-inches from broiler. Preheat broiler.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, 3/4 cup of the Asiago cheese, cheddar cheese, and milk.

3. In a 12-inch non-stick oven-proof skillet over medium heat, melt butter; add sweet potatoes. Cover and cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until sweet potatoes are almost tender.
4. Add spinach and cook, uncovered for 1-2 minutes or until slightly wilted.
5. Reduce heat to medium-low; pour egg mixture over vegetables; cover and cook for 5-6 minutes or until bubbles are coming through mixture and bottom is golden brown (eggs won't be fully set).
6. Remove cover; sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup Asiago cheese.
7. Broil for 1 1/2 minutes or until egg is set and cheese is bubbling and slightly browned.
8. Let stand for 5 minutes; run spatula around outside edge of skillet to release frittata. Slice and serve immediately.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Atherosclerosis October 2012](#)
- ² [Science Daily May 7, 2018](#)
- ³ [The University of Sydney August 4, 2015](#)
- ^{4, 6, 7} [Times Now News May 9, 2018](#)
- ⁵ [Heart Foundation Eggs & Heart Healthy Eating](#)
- ⁸ [BMJ October 22, 2013](#)
- ⁹ [Body and Soul December 19, 2016](#)
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- ¹¹ [Nutrients July 3, 2017](#)
- ¹² [Incredible Egg 2018](#)
- ¹³ [Food.com](#)