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**EGGS ARE NOW NATURALLY LOWER IN CHOLESTEROL**

**New Study Shows Large Eggs are 14 Percent Lower in Cholesterol & 64 Percent Higher in Vitamin D**

**Park Ridge, IL (February 8, 2011)** – According to new nutrition data from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), eggs are lower in cholesterol than previously thought. The USDA-ARS recently reviewed the nutrient composition of standard large eggs, and results show the average amount of cholesterol in one large egg is 185 mg, 14 percent lower than previously recorded. The analysis also revealed that large eggs now contain 41 IU of vitamin D, an increase of 64 percent.

“We collected a random sample of regular large shell eggs from 12 locations across the country to analyze the nutrient content of eggs,” says Dr. Jacob Exler, Nutritionist with the Agricultural Research Service’s Nutrient Data Laboratory. “This testing procedure was last completed with eggs in 2002, and while most nutrients remained similar to those values, cholesterol decreased by 14 percent and vitamin D increased by 64 percent from 2002 values.”

The collected eggs were sent to a laboratory at Virginia Tech University to be prepared for nutrient analysis at certified nutrient analysis laboratories. The samples were randomly paired for the testing procedure, and the analysis laboratories tested samples to determine composition of a variety of nutrients including protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. Accuracy and precision were monitored using quality control samples.

According to Dr. Exler, this procedure is standard for the National Food and Nutrient Analysis Program (NFNAP), the program responsible for analyzing the nutrient composition of a wide variety of foods and making nutrition information publicly available. This information is available on the nutrient data lab website at [www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata](http://www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata). The new nutrient information will also be updated on nutrition labels to reflect these changes wherever eggs are sold, from egg cartons in supermarkets to school and restaurant menus.

**Cracking Egg Myths**

Over the years, Americans have unnecessarily shied away from eggs – despite their taste, value, convenience and nutrition – for fear of dietary cholesterol. However, more than 40 years of research have demonstrated that healthy adults can enjoy eggs without significantly impacting their risk of heart disease.

“My research focuses on ways to optimize diet quality, and I have long suspected that eliminating eggs from the diet generally has the opposite effect. In our own studies of egg intake, we have seen no harmful effects, even in people with high blood cholesterol,” says Dr. David Katz, Director of the Yale University Prevention Research Center.

Enjoying an egg a day can fall within current cholesterol guidelines, particularly if individuals opt for low-cholesterol foods throughout the day. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest that eating one whole egg per day does not result in increased blood cholesterol levels and recommend that individuals consume, on average, less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day. A single large egg contains 185 mg cholesterol.

Some researchers believe the natural decrease in the cholesterol level of eggs could be related to the improvements farmers have made to the hens' feed. Hens are fed a high-quality, nutritionally balanced diet of feed made up mostly of corn, soybean meal, vitamins and minerals. Poultry nutrition specialists analyze the feed to ensure that the natural nutrients hens need to stay healthy are included in their diets. Nutrition researchers at Iowa State University are compiling a report to outline potential reasons for the natural decrease in cholesterol in eggs.

### **Nutrient-Rich Eggs**

Eggs now contain 41 IU of vitamin D, which is an increase of 64 percent from 2002. Eggs are one of the few foods that are a naturally good source of vitamin D, meaning that one egg provides at least 10 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA). Vitamin D plays an important role in calcium absorption, helping to form and maintain strong bones.

The amount of protein in one large egg – 6 grams of protein or 12 percent of the Recommended Daily Value – remains the same, and the protein in eggs is one of the highest quality proteins found in any food. Eggs are all-natural, and one egg has lots of vitamins and minerals all for 70 calories. The nutrients in eggs can play a role in weight management, muscle strength, healthy pregnancy, brain function, eye health and more. At less than 15 cents apiece, eggs are an affordable and delicious breakfast option.

For more information on cholesterol and the nutritional benefits of eggs, along with recipes and cooking tips, visit [www.incredibleegg.org](http://www.incredibleegg.org).

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### **About the American Egg Board (AEB)**

AEB is the U.S. egg producer's link to the consumer in communicating the value of the incredible edible egg™ and is funded from a national legislative checkoff on all egg production from companies with greater than 75,000 layers, in the continental United States. The board consists of 18 members and 18 alternates from all regions of the country who are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The AEB staff carries out the programs under the board direction. AEB is located in Park Ridge, Ill. Visit [www.IncredibleEgg.org](http://www.IncredibleEgg.org) for more information.

### **About the Egg Nutrition Center (ENC)**

The Egg Nutrition Center (ENC) is the health education and research center of the American Egg Board. Established in 1979, ENC provides science-based information to health promotion agencies, physicians, dietitians, nutritional scientists, media and consumers on issues related to egg nutrition and the role of eggs in the American diet. ENC is located in Park Ridge, IL. Visit [www.eggnutritioncenter.org](http://www.eggnutritioncenter.org) for more information.