

## Eggs and Cholesterol: Unscrambling the Myths

*Enjoying an egg a day can be part of a healthy diet*

**Park Ridge, Ill. (Jan. 17, 2012)** – While it may surprise many Americans, eggs can actually be an unexpected hero in helping to shape a healthy diet. Common misconceptions about dietary cholesterol and its impact on heart disease keep many people from eating eggs, despite their nutritional benefits. However, almost 40 years of research shows healthy adults can enjoy an egg every day without significantly impacting their risk of heart disease,<sup>1</sup> which is important to know as American Heart Month approaches in February.

### Cracking the Cholesterol Myth

And now there are even more reasons to discuss the nutritional benefits of eggs, as USDA data shows that one large egg is now 14 percent lower in cholesterol, down from 212 mg to 185 mg, and 64 percent higher in vitamin D, with 41 IU per egg.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, one large egg contains six grams of high-quality protein and 13 essential nutrients for 70 calories. Enjoying an egg a day, especially as part of a heart-healthy diet balanced with fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy, falls well within current cholesterol guidelines.

“Research shows that saturated fat may be more likely to raise a person’s blood cholesterol than dietary cholesterol,” says Neva Cochran, registered dietitian, nutrition writer and researcher for *Woman’s World Magazine*. “Eating a balanced breakfast with high-quality protein foods like eggs, along with other nutrient-rich foods like fruit and whole grains, is the best way to start the day. Unlike sugary foods, eggs have no simple sugars and contain no carbs, providing steady and sustained energy.”

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans support the role of eggs in a healthy diet, stating that consumption of one egg per day is not associated with risk of coronary heart disease or stroke in healthy adults.<sup>3</sup> And, eggs provide high-quality protein that helps build muscles and increases satiety for all-day energy, which can help maintain a healthy weight, an important factor in promoting overall health.

### Incredible Egg Benefits

Cochran also points out that at an average of \$0.15 cents apiece, eggs are an affordable, versatile, nutrient powerhouse that contributes to nutritious diets in many ways:

- **Breakfast boosters:** Research shows that eating high-quality protein foods for breakfast, like eggs, can help increase satiety, maintain long-lasting energy and improve cognitive skills like memory recall time.<sup>4,5</sup>
- **Sunshine supplement:** 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.
- **Weight-loss companion:** Eggs can aid in weight management, an important part of overall health. Research shows that eating eggs for breakfast can help overweight dieters lose more weight, lower their body mass index and shrink their waist more than eating a bagel breakfast of equal calories.<sup>6</sup>

For more information on the nutrition benefits of eggs or recipe ideas, visit [www.enc-online.org](http://www.enc-online.org) or [www.IncredibleEgg.org](http://www.IncredibleEgg.org), “Like” the Incredible Edible Egg on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/IncredibleEggs) or follow [@IncredibleEggs](https://twitter.com/IncredibleEggs) on Twitter.

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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, Ill.

Visit [www.eggnutritioncenter.org](http://www.eggnutritioncenter.org) or [www.nutritionunscrambled.com](http://www.nutritionunscrambled.com) for more information.

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<sup>i</sup>Lee A and B Griffin. 2006. Dietary cholesterol, eggs and coronary heart disease risk in perspective. Nutrition Bulletin (British Nutrition Foundation). 31:21-27.

<sup>ii</sup>US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 2011. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 23. Online. Available at: Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, [http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site\\_main.htm?modecode=12-35-45-00](http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=12-35-45-00). Accessed December 14, 2011.

<sup>iii</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.

<sup>iv</sup>Rampersaud G, et al. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. JADA 2005;105:743-760.

<sup>v</sup>Pollitt E, et al. Fasting and cognition in well-and undernourished school children: a review of three experimental studies. AJCN 1998;67:779S-784S.

<sup>vi</sup>Vander Wal JS et al , et al. Egg breakfast enhances weight loss. Int J of Obesity 2008: 32(10):1545-1551.