

EGGS: UNSCRAMBLING FACT FROM FICTION

Misconceptions exist that dietary cholesterol is harmless and you can eat as many eggs as you like without risk.

cracking the code

Eggs are a cheap, tasty source of high-quality protein, minerals, vitamins and phytonutrients such as carotenoids. But research shows that eating one egg a day can significantly increase your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. And if you already have diabetes, enjoying an egg sandwich or poached egg on toast every day can double your risk of heart attack, stroke and premature death!

Some findings suggest that healthy people do not experience a rise in blood cholesterol levels by eating up to six eggs per week. But leading nutrition scientists are warning that egg yolks should not be eaten indiscriminately, without considering your genetic predisposition, overall food habits and risk of heart attack.

While it's now clear that dietary cholesterol has a minor role compared to saturated/trans fats in raising your blood cholesterol levels, it's not just about your fasting cholesterol level. Dietary cholesterol (including from egg yolks) can still increase inflammation and promote dangerous plaque

formation inside your arteries. A Canadian study showed people who eat five eggs per week over 40 years have two-thirds the amount of plaque formed as one-pack-a-day smokers over the same period.

eating tips

If you have pre-diabetes, diabetes or are at increased risk of developing heart disease, existing evidence warrants this caution: continue to limit your intake of eggs to two per week.

For those with no health risks, up to six eggs per week probably won't raise your cholesterol level if your diet is also low in saturated fat. But remember, it's not just about cholesterol levels.

if you choose to eat eggs

- ▶ Go for free- or open-range eggs.
- ▶ Take your eggs soft-boiled or poached—they don't contain oxidised cholesterol—or make an egg white-only omelet.
- ▶ Use natural egg substitutes more often. Try scrambled tofu for breakfast and ground flaxseed or pureed prunes to bind and thicken in cooking and baking.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.