

Health Benefits of Eggs

HIV/Aids and Tuberculosis (TB)

A nutritionally adequate diet plays an important role in immune function. Deficiencies of protein and essential nutrients have a particular detrimental effect on the ability of the body to fight HIV/AIDS and TB. Eggs are a naturally nutrient-dense food, which means they have a high proportion of nutrients to energy (kilojoules). One large egg has 315kJ and provides the highest quality protein (6g/egg) and 13 essential vitamins and minerals, which makes an egg a valuable contributor to a nutritious diet for these diseases.

Heart disease

Numerous studies in recent years have clearly demonstrated the lack of relationship between egg intake, blood cholesterol levels and coronary heart disease risk. Foods high in fat, especially saturated and trans fatty acids such as fatty meats, sausages and hard cheese, have a far greater impact on heart health than cholesterol in food. Eggs are low in saturated fats and higher in the "heart healthy" mono- and polyunsaturated fats. Healthy people can eat eggs every day, provided they are taken as part of a balanced diet, low in saturated and trans-fats. People with Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (an inherited form of cholesterol which carries a high risk of heart disease) should restrict their egg intake to 3-4 per week.

Overweight and Obesity

Several studies have reported that starting the day with eggs for breakfast, as part of a reduced-energy (kJ) diet, helps overweight adults feel fuller for longer, feel more energetic and lose more weight. At 315kJ per large egg eggs actually add few kJ for all the nutrients they provide. When teamed up with whole grains (e.g. whole-wheat bread) and fruit or vegetables they are a complete meal, readily available, easy to prepare and inexpensive, making them a useful tool in weight loss programmes.

Pregnancy and fetal brain development

Eggs are an excellent source of choline, a nutrient which is essential for normal functioning of all cells, for brain and nerve function and for the transportation of nutrients throughout the body. It helps prevent birth defects, as well as helps promote brain and memory development in the fetus, newborn and into old age. Choline is therefore of extreme importance during pregnancy and lactation when the reserves can be depleted. One egg per day will provide 28% of a pregnant woman's choline requirement.

Eye Health

Eggs are a good source of the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthine, which play an important role in keeping the eyes healthy and helping prevent common causes of age-related blindness. These two antioxidants are found in the egg yolk and help to reduce the risk of developing cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, a disease that develops with age and causes blurred or distorted vision. They accumulate in the eye where they protect against some types of harmful, high-energy wavelengths of light. Lutein and zeaxanthine seem to be more bioavailable from eggs than from other sources.

Protein Quality

Protein is one of the most important elements of our diet. Our bodies use protein to build new and repair old tissue. Eggs are champions at providing high quality protein. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Nine of these amino acids cannot be manufactured by the body and must be derived from the diet. A complete protein food contains enough of these 9 essential amino acids to promote growth and maintain body tissue.

Egg, milk and meat (including poultry and fish) proteins are all complete proteins, but egg protein is of the highest quality, rating 100. Compared to eggs, milk is rated 93 and fish and beef 75. One egg has approximately the same protein content as 30 g cooked meat, fish or poultry. And apart from being the most versatile and best source of protein in our diet, it is also the cheapest. Nobody can afford not to have their egg a day.

Nutritional information on eggs

- Two large eggs = ±155 calories.
- Eggs contain the highest quality food protein known – it is often the standard by which all other proteins are judged.
- Eggs are second only to mother's milk for human nutrition
- In addition to the 9 essential amino acids (essential proteins that the body cannot create itself), there are another 9 amino acids in an egg.
- A moderate amount of fat (± 5 grams) is found in a large egg yolk.
- An egg yolk is one of the few foods that contain Vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin, which is good for the immune system.
- One large egg contains 213 mg cholesterol, which needs to be present in the body to produce vitamin D.
- One large egg provides 3% of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for calcium-essential for building and maintaining bones and teeth and other functions associated with the blood and muscles. Calcium is mostly found in the yolk.

Calories

EGG SIZE	CALORIES
Medium	66
Large	75
Extra Large	84
Jumbo	94

- Do not use an egg if it is cracked or leaking.
- When buying eggs, get them home and refrigerate them as soon as possible.
- For easy peeling of a boiled egg, immediately cool the egg under cold running water. Crack the shell all over by gently tapping the egg on the counter top.
- Put eggs in the fridge if they are not going to be eaten within an hour.
- The protein in the egg is destroyed when the egg is overcooked. (E.g. the brown edges on a fried egg.)
- It is said that each pleat on a chef's hat represents another way of preparing eggs.
- Egg yolk measures about one tablespoon of liquid.
- A fresh egg will sink in water, a stale one will float
- A hen requires \pm 24-26 hours to produce an egg.
- Protein, found in eggs, is needed for every part of your body: the skin, muscles, hair, blood, body organs, eyes, even fingernails and bones.