



Patient Information

Eggs: A Good Source of Nutrition for Children

An ideal breakfast for kids would fill them up until lunch and provide protein to give them the energy to start the day off right. Eggs are a nutritionally sound choice. Eggs contain many nutrients, making them a sensible food to add to a child's diet any time of the day. In addition, eggs are inexpensive, convenient and easy to chew and digest.

First, the Facts

One large egg contains about 75 calories and 4.5 grams of total fat, including 1.5 grams of saturated fat, 0.5 grams of polyunsaturated fat and 2 grams of monounsaturated fat. Eggs contain at least 13 vitamins and minerals and are one of the few foods that provide a natural source of vitamin D.

Eating one large egg provides 213 milligrams of cholesterol; however, this doesn't mean eggs should be unacceptable in a child's diet. It just means that the child's overall diet should be low in cholesterol, as recommended by the American Heart Association.

The yellow part of the egg, also called the yolk, contains more minerals than the white. The yolk contains all the vitamin A, D and E and zinc in the egg, as well as more phosphorus, folate, manganese, thiamin, iron, iodine, copper and calcium than the white. The fat, cholesterol and 44% of the protein are in the yolk. The white contains more than half the egg's protein, riboflavin and niacin, as well as chlorine, magnesium, potassium, sodium and sulfur.

Protein

Eggs are a significant source of high-quality protein. It is especially important that children get enough protein in their diets to assist with growth and development. Protein is also a vital energy source. And the protein found in eggs provides an optimum mixture of amino acids.

A large egg provides 6 grams of protein. Because of their high amount of protein, eggs are classified in the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans and nuts category of the Food Guide Pyramid.

A Filling Food

Satiety is the feeling of fullness. Eggs have a high satiety effect, which means that they are a food that will make a child (or adult) feel full. In a study, researchers wanted to find out which of two breakfasts was more filling: a bagel, cream cheese and yogurt, or two eggs, toast and jelly. They found that the people who ate the egg breakfast felt fuller after breakfast and stayed full longer than the group that ate the bagel breakfast.

The first meal of the day is crucial for a child. If students eat eggs, either at home before school or in the school breakfast program, they will be fuller for longer. They won't have hunger pangs while they're trying to learn and they may not even eat as much for lunch.

CAD Protector

A recent study found that there was no correlation between eating eggs and coronary artery disease (CAD) risk. Researchers tested a group of children between the ages of 8 and 12 who were at high risk for CAD and found that egg intake did not increase the children's risk for the disease.

Choline

Choline is a nutrient found in the egg that is essential for the normal functioning of cells. It is also important for women who may eventually be mothers to get enough choline, since it facilitates brain development in the fetus and newborn.

Lutein

Eggs contain the antioxidant lutein, which plays an important role in keeping eyes healthy. It accumulates with zeaxanthin — another antioxidant — in the macular region of the eye, where these substances protect against some types of harmful, high-energy wavelengths of light. Getting enough lutein is important for a child's future, since it also may protect against age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in the elderly.

Additional Notes:
