



Blackbird Clinic PLLC

Spring 2009 Newsletter

Eggs: A Scrambled Perspective

Dr. Andrea Black, Board Certified Naturopathic Physician, is director of Blackbird Clinic PLLC, which specializes in naturopathic and nutritional medicine:

- ✓ *For all ages and a variety of health conditions*
- ✓ *Addressing the underlying causes of disease*
- ✓ *Using a holistic approach*
- ✓ *Safe and effective natural therapies*

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EGG MYTHS:

You've probably heard various claims that eggs are too high in cholesterol and may contribute to atherosclerosis. Although a large egg contains approximately 210 grams of cholesterol, we now know that changing the amount of dietary cholesterol consumption may have only a minor effect on blood concentrations of cholesterol in most people. However, the damaging health effects of eggs may be attributed to the way you cook them.

One reason why dietary cholesterol does not impact our overall cholesterol levels as much as originally believed is due to our body's ability to form high-density lipoproteins, or HDL's. The HDL acts as a scavenger, absorbing excess cholesterol. Several studies have found that absorbing eggs may actually help to increase the number and size of HDL's. Larger HDL's are more robust than smaller ones at scavenging cholesterol out of the bloodstream, and ultimately out of the body.

Even though a considerable amount of cholesterol is consumed when an egg is eaten, it has been found that much of the cholesterol becomes unavailable for absorption in the presence of certain phospholipids. Lecithin is a phospholipid found in eggs. It interferes with the absorption of egg cholesterol and markedly lowers its uptake by the intestines.

A PERFECT FOOD?

Nutrient density is a key reason why eggs are important in a healthy diet. When a food item provides more nutrients than calories to the diet, it is referred to as "nutrient dense". While eggs provide only 1.3% of the average caloric intake, they are so nutrient dense that they contribute a great deal more nutrition than calories. Each egg provides 6% of the RDA for riboflavin, 5% of the folate, 4% of both vitamin E and A, and almost 4% of the RDA for protein.

Not only are eggs nutrient dense, they are an affordable, high quality source of protein. Eggs have a biological value of 93.7%. Biological value is the efficacy with which protein is used for growth. For a comparison, fish is rated at 76%, while beef is rated at 74.3%.

Blackbird's Breakfast Burrito

*1 large whole-wheat tortilla
1-2 cooked eggs (unscrambled)
¼ cup cooked black beans
freshly sliced avocado or ¼ cup
guacamole
salsa, green or red
1 Tbsp cilantro, chopped*

*Layer the following ingredients
onto a large warm tortilla: eggs,
beans, avocado, salsa, and
cilantro. Fold in sides of tortilla
and roll up into a burrito.
Enjoy!*

*High in protein, fiber, and
minerals.*

Eggs Okanogan

*1 whole wheat English muffin,
halved
1 egg, poached
2 pieces nitrate-free turkey
bacon, baked or broiled
1 Tbsp. Basil pesto sauce*

*Place cooked turkey bacon and
poached egg on toasted English
muffin. Dribble pesto sauce
over the top—delicious and
nutritious!*

OXIDIZED CHOLESTEROL:

If you are eating your eggs hard- or soft-boiled, poached, sunny-side-up, or over-easy, the cholesterol is not likely to cause damage to your arteries or heart. Scrambled eggs (including omelets and eggs used in baked good) are the exception. Why?

The yolk contains most of the egg's cholesterol. Breaking and scrambling eggs allows that cholesterol to be exposed to much more heat and air compared to other cooking techniques that leave the yolk intact. The cholesterol in scrambled egg yolk, when exposed to heat and air, can oxidize before you even ingest them. This oxidized cholesterol can potentially contribute to atherosclerosis or damage to your heart.

RESEARCH:

What are the origins of the myth that “cholesterol is bad for you and causes atherosclerosis”? About 100 years ago Nikolai Anitschkov, a renowned Russian researcher, did an experiment where he fed rabbits cholesterol, and they developed atherosclerosis. This experiment was “proof” that cholesterol causes atherosclerotic vascular disease. About 50 years later another scientist tried to copy Anitshkov's research. He made sure, unlike Anitschkov, that the cholesterol was not allowed to lie around the rabbit cages being exposed to air and causing it to oxidize rapidly. Consequently, these rabbits did not develop atherosclerosis. This experiment demonstrated that un-oxidized cholesterol did not cause atherosclerosis in rabbits.

COOKING EGGS:

So, if you love your eggs scrambled and eat them this way frequently, you may want to consider poaching or boiling. If you fry them, try sunny-side-up or over-easy. Will the occasional scrambled egg when traveling or visiting friends or relatives be harmful to your health? Probably not, as long as you are otherwise eating a healthy diet.

Although eggs are most nutritious and easiest to digest when eaten raw, this increases one's risk of salmonella exposure. Salmonella in humans can lead to severe sickness and potential death in at-risk populations, such as young children and the elderly.

Finally, here are some easy TIPS about eating and preparing eggs:

- Know where your eggs come from—local, fresh organic eggs are often a good choice.
- Never eat an already cracked egg.
- Wash unclean eggs before you crack them.
- Smell the egg—if it smells bad, don't eat it.
- Think twice about sampling raw cookie dough or cake better if it contains raw eggs.

Federal Law requires that we warn you of the following:

1. The information provided in this article is for educational purposes only.

2. Your individual health status and any required health care treatments can only be properly addressed by a professional healthcare provider of your choice. Remember: There is no adequate substitution for a personal consultation with your chosen health care provider. Therefore, we encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.

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