

# Eggs -TRAORDINARY!

## Get Cracking!

The egg is among the most nutritious foods on earth. Unlike meat and vegetables, it is actually designed to be a food — to support the chick embryo.

Eggs contain every vitamin except vitamin C, a number of minerals including iron and zinc, and are a good source of protein. They are also extremely versatile when it comes to cooking — ask anyone who uses eggs to make sauces, quiches, and cakes.

Unfortunately, the poor old egg has had some bad press. It started with the debate about eggs, *cholesterol* and heart disease, and more recently has involved a scare in the USA and UK, which linked eggs with *salmonella* poisoning.

So, what is the truth about this popular food?

### Cholesterol Crazy

Eggs have been condemned for their dietary cholesterol content. If you have a very fatty diet, and are at risk of heart disease, eggs may well pose a problem.

However, some researchers in the USA have found that it is the intake of *saturated fat*, not dietary cholesterol, that most influences blood cholesterol levels.

It seems that dietary cholesterol does not automatically become blood cholesterol. Most of your blood cholesterol is made by your body, and individuals will vary in how much their bodies make.

The researchers concluded that most healthy people should have no reason to avoid eggs. In fact, if you're following a low fat diet, you can happily eat an egg a day.

### The Fat Debate

Eggs have also been avoided by some people because of their fat content. It's recommended that for a diet to be healthy, no more than 30 per cent of kilojoules should come from fat — so many people could probably do with cutting back on their fat consumption. But the type of fat consumed is also important.

Saturated fat (found mainly in animal foods) raises levels of bad cholesterol (LDL) more than any other element in the diet.

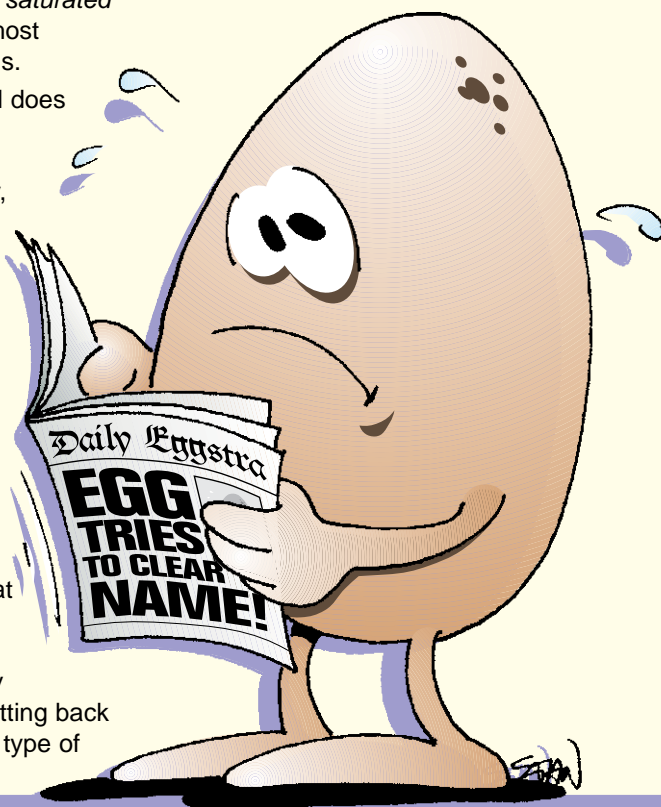
*Monounsaturated* and *polyunsaturated fats*, however, may actually lower blood cholesterol levels.

An egg is 10 per cent fat (about 4.5 grams), but the good news is, most of this is polyunsaturated and monounsaturated — the good fats.

### Salmonella Scare

Recent reports in the USA and the UK have linked eggs with food poisoning, thanks to a particular strain of salmonella present within the egg itself. Authorities have advised against eating raw or lightly-cooked eggs, to minimise the risk of salmonella poisoning.

This is not the case in Australia and New Zealand. Both these countries are free of this particular strain of salmonella, and so eggs are safe to eat — cooked or raw.



Some fascinating facts about eggs!

- A hen requires 24 to 26 hours to produce an egg. Thirty minutes later, she starts all over again.
- An egg shell may have as many as 17,000 tiny pores over its surface, through which the egg can absorb flavours and odours. So, to keep eggs fresh, store them in their carton.
- Eggs age more in one day at room temperature than they do after one week in the refrigerator.
- White-shelled eggs are produced by hens with white feathers and ear lobes, while brown-shelled eggs are produced by hens with red feathers and red ear lobes.
- To tell if an egg is raw or hard-boiled, spin it! If the egg spins easily, it is hard-boiled but if it wobbles, it's raw.
- If an egg is accidentally dropped on the floor, sprinkle it heavily with salt for an easy clean up.

Source: American Egg Board.

“The rooster crows... but the hen delivers the goods!”  
Bits & Pieces

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Main sources:  
The Egg Nutrition Centre at  
<http://www.enc-online.org>;  
and The NSW Egg  
Producers' Cooperative.