

THE LOWDOWN ON EGGS – CRACK THIS!

Q: Which one came first...the chicken or the egg? Our answer: The egg:-)...let the crackdown begin...



In an *eggshell*, you find the **egg white** (albumin, a protein) and the egg yolk. Although a single egg yolk contains **almost your total daily allowance for cholesterol** (300mg), it also offers beneficial components such as fat-soluble **vitamins A, D, E and K**. Further, the egg white or albumin is an excellent source of lean protein, so there is reason to wonder whether it really is such a bad thing??

The **cholesterol** (soft, waxy substance) that your body needs is mostly made by your liver and the intake of cholesterol through your diet only contributes a small amount. The main concern is the higher your intake of saturated fats, the more cholesterol your liver will produce - this becomes a threat once your LDL ('bad') cholesterol level has crossed a set limit.

An **egg yolk**, although **high in cholesterol**, is actually **low in saturated fat** and therefore should not directly raise your LDL cholesterol – one should look more at what you are eating with the egg (e.g. bacon), how you are preparing it (frying vs. poaching) or what you are eating for the remainder of the day, which may actually be where the danger is originating. Omega-3 enriched eggs can now be found in most local supermarkets - while they are similar to normal eggs (in terms of cholesterol content) they do contain **up to 10 times more of the polyunsaturated fatty acids** called **omega-3 fatty acids**. Omega-3 fatty acids are commonly found in fish and fish oils as well as canola, soybean and flaxseed oils and are proven to have heart healthy benefits. Look out for oils endorsed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA bearing the **Heart Mark** logo as these are better options.



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So where to from here? Those *at risk*, who have a family history of high cholesterol, have established atherosclerotic disease or are suffering from type I or II diabetes, should not consume more than **200mg** of cholesterol per day so it wouldn't be a good idea to cook up an egg every morning. However, those *not at risk* can happily enjoy 1 egg a day provided that the rest of the day's dietary intake is healthy and well balanced. Saturated fats can be found in most animal sources such as fatty meats, whole/full cream dairy products as well as in commercially prepared cakes and pastries – these should be avoided. Make sure that you make room for 5 portions of fruits and vegetables every day to help you reach your fibre needs, and oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or tuna should be eaten at least twice weekly.



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The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA recommends:

The best cooking methods for eggs are to boil or poach them. Alternatively, you can use a small amount (up to 1 teaspoon) of vegetable oil or use of a non-stick spray for frying or scrambling.

****Quick tip: crack an egg in a dessert bowl, prick the yolk, cover it with a plate and microwave for 30-40 seconds at full power***

- Use only 1 egg yolk when making a 2-3 egg omelette or when scrambling more than 1 egg together
- Limit your intake of saturated fats from sources such as baked commercial products (pies, pastries, cookies and cakes)

Try the following tasty breakfast recipe at home:

Vegetarian Omelette with peppers

Serves: 1



*Any of your favourite vegetables can be used in this recipe to replace/add with the peppers

2-3 egg whites and 1 egg yolk, beaten
¼ diced onion
¼ red, ¼ yellow and ¼ green pepper, diced
Salt and pepper to taste
Optional ¼ teaspoon crushed garlic
Non-stick spray

Preparation:

- Cover the base of a pan with non-stick spray and cook the onion for a few minutes or until slightly browned. Add the diced peppers, and cook for another minute or two
- Add this onion and pepper combination to the beaten eggs and combine well
- Pour the egg mixture into a large pan and sprinkle with a dash of salt, pepper and the crushed garlic
- Allow to cook until the bottom of the eggs are lightly golden brown, then either flip or fold in half and cook for a few more minutes until ready

Enjoy!

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