

FACT SHEET 5

NUTRITIONAL FACTS ABOUT EGGS

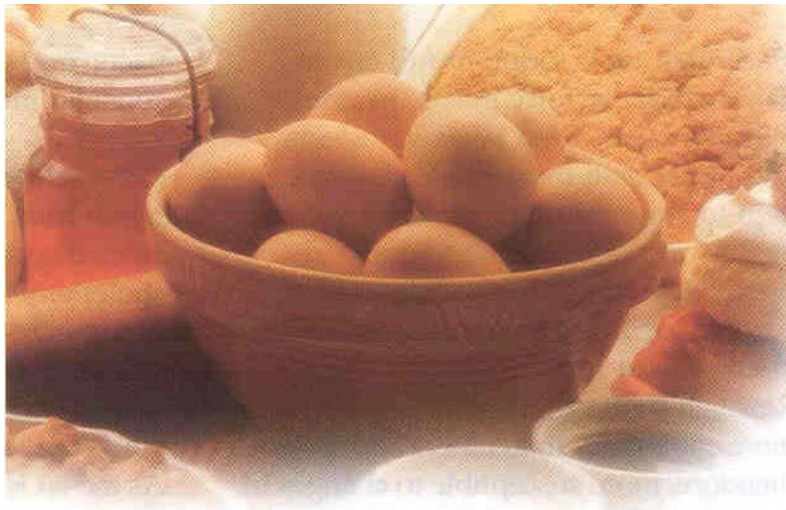


DID YOU KNOW THAT

EGGS ARE AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF PROTEIN

Proteins are made up of smaller units called amino acids. All the amino acids that are essential for humans are found in eggs in such ideal proportions that egg protein is used as the standard against which all other protein foods are rated.

Protein is essential for building new cells to replace those damaged during the normal wear and tear of living. During times of growth protein requirements are especially high, so children, teenagers, pregnant and lactating women have the greatest needs.



One egg supplies 6 grams of excellent quality protein. That's as much protein as you'd find in 35 grams of cottage cheese or 180 ml of milk.

EGGS SUPPLY VALUABLE IRON

Iron is a mineral needed for making red blood cells. Insufficient iron causes anaemia, a common condition in women and teenage girls since their requirements for iron are so high.

Eggs are a good source of iron. Each egg yolk provides 1.2 mg of iron - as much as a lamb chop or 4 dried apricot halves. Iron is best absorbed when a food containing vitamin C is eaten at the same meal. So remember to have a small glass of fruit juice or some type of fruit or vegetable at the same meal as your egg and you'll absorb the iron more efficiently.

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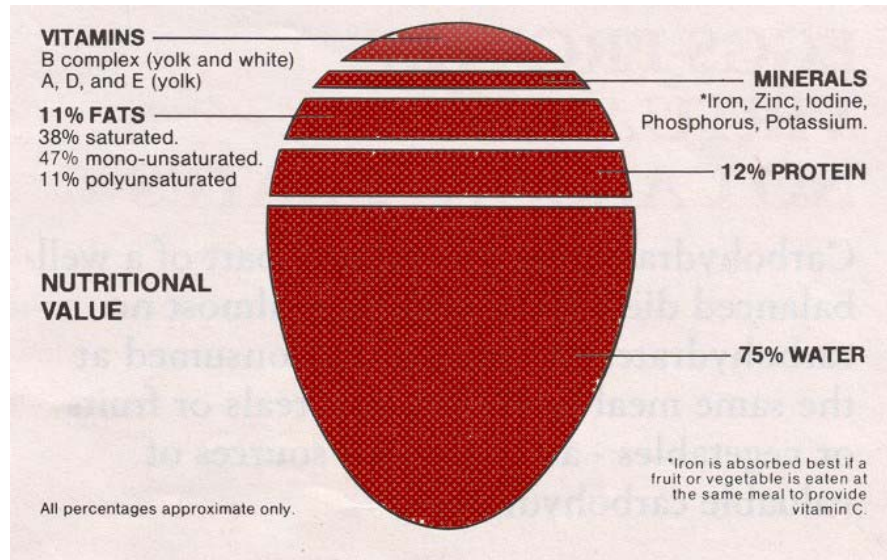


EGGS CONTAIN A WONDERFUL RANGE OF VITAMINS

The vitamins found in eggs include vitamins A, D and E and every one of the B complex vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, B6, B12, folic acid, pantothenic acid and biotin).

The only vitamin missing is vitamin C, found in fruits and vegetables. Eggs are a particularly valuable source of vitamin B12 - a vitamin which may be lacking in vegetarian diets. Vitamins A, D and E are found only in the egg yolk; most of the B group vitamins are found in both white and yolk, although generally in greater quantities in the yolk.

Eating a large number of raw eggs at one time is inadvisable since a natural substance called avidin stops the vitamin, biotin, from being absorbed. When cooked, the avidin in eggs is destroyed.



EGGS ARE ALSO A SOURCE OF MINERALS

If you were crazy enough to eat the shell of an egg it would provide a good dose of calcium. However, other important minerals such as potassium, iron, phosphorus, iodine and zinc are more conveniently supplied by eating the yolk and the white of the egg.

EGGS PROVIDE ONLY 2.4% OF THE FAT IN THE AUSTRALIAN DIET

Eggs play only a minor role in the high fat diet consumed by Australians. Each egg contributes approximately 5 grams of fat - that's about as much fat as you get from one mouthful of a sausage.

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A HIGH PROPORTION OF THE FAT IN EGGS IS UNSATURATED

Fats come in three major types: saturated, mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated. These terms refer to the chemical structure of the fats. Saturated fats can be converted into cholesterol in the blood while some polyunsaturated fats can help lower high levels of fats in the blood. Mono-unsaturated fats do not alter the level of cholesterol in the blood and people who use a lot of this type of fat have little heart disease.

In an egg, 38% of the fat is saturated. 47% is mono-saturated and 11% is a valuable type of polyunsaturated fat, called linoleic acid. There are also small quantities of other polyunsaturated fats present. Eggs, like most other foods should be eaten in moderation. If you have relatively normal cholesterol levels then an egg a day is ok.

Most foods contain a mixture of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Some examples of fat content of popular foods are as follows;

FOOD	% OF SERVING AS FAT	TOTAL FAT FAT	TYPE OF FAT (GRAMS)		
			POLYUN-SATURATED	MONOUN-SATURATED	SATURATED
2 X 55g egg	11	12	2	6	4
2 X grilled lamb loin chops	16	31	1	13	17
Large hamburger	15	31	5	12	14
Bag hot chips	15	35	1	14	20
Devon sandwich (with polyunsaturated margarine)	18	22	6	9	7
Large apple	-	-	-	-	-
Milk, 300ml carton	4	11	-	4	7
Grilled fish (180g)	2	4	2	1	1
Polyunsaturated margarine, 2tsp	80	8	4	2	2
Chocolate, 100g bar	30	30	1	10	19
Meat pie	14	24	2	11	11

As shown in the above table eggs are a relatively low fat food and almost two-thirds of this low fat content is in the form of unsaturated fats which are known to have a favourable effect on blood cholesterol levels. In addition, of course, eggs represent a compact nutrient package, full of protein, vitamins and minerals.



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EGGS PROVIDE VIRTUALLY NO CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are an essential part of a well-balanced diet. Since eggs have almost no carbohydrate, they should be consumed at the same meal as breads or cereals or fruits or vegetables - all important sources of valuable carbohydrates.

EGGS ARE LOW IN KILOJOULES

An average-sized egg has only about 312 kilojoules - about the same number as an apple, a thin slice of cheese or half a small container of natural yoghurt. That makes eggs an ideal food for slimmers.

THE CHOLESTEROL IN AN EGG IS FOUND ONLY IN THE YOLK

Like all foods of animal origin, eggs contain cholesterol. This is an essential substance in the body, a vital part of the wall of all body cells. Cholesterol is also used by the body to produce some of its hormones.

Cholesterol comes in ready-made foods and is also made within the body from saturated fats in foods. Unfortunately some people's bodies make too much cholesterol from the saturated fats and this excess can accumulate in the arteries. Some types of dietary fibre may prevent this occurring.

An egg contains about 185mg of cholesterol, all in the yolk. Recent research suggests that cholesterol in foods will not cause problems if the diet is low in fat. Current recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Australians suggest everyone should avoid eating too much fat. So in a healthy low fat diet, moderate consumption of eggs should cause no problems.

THERE IS MORE WHITE THAN YOLK IN AN EGG

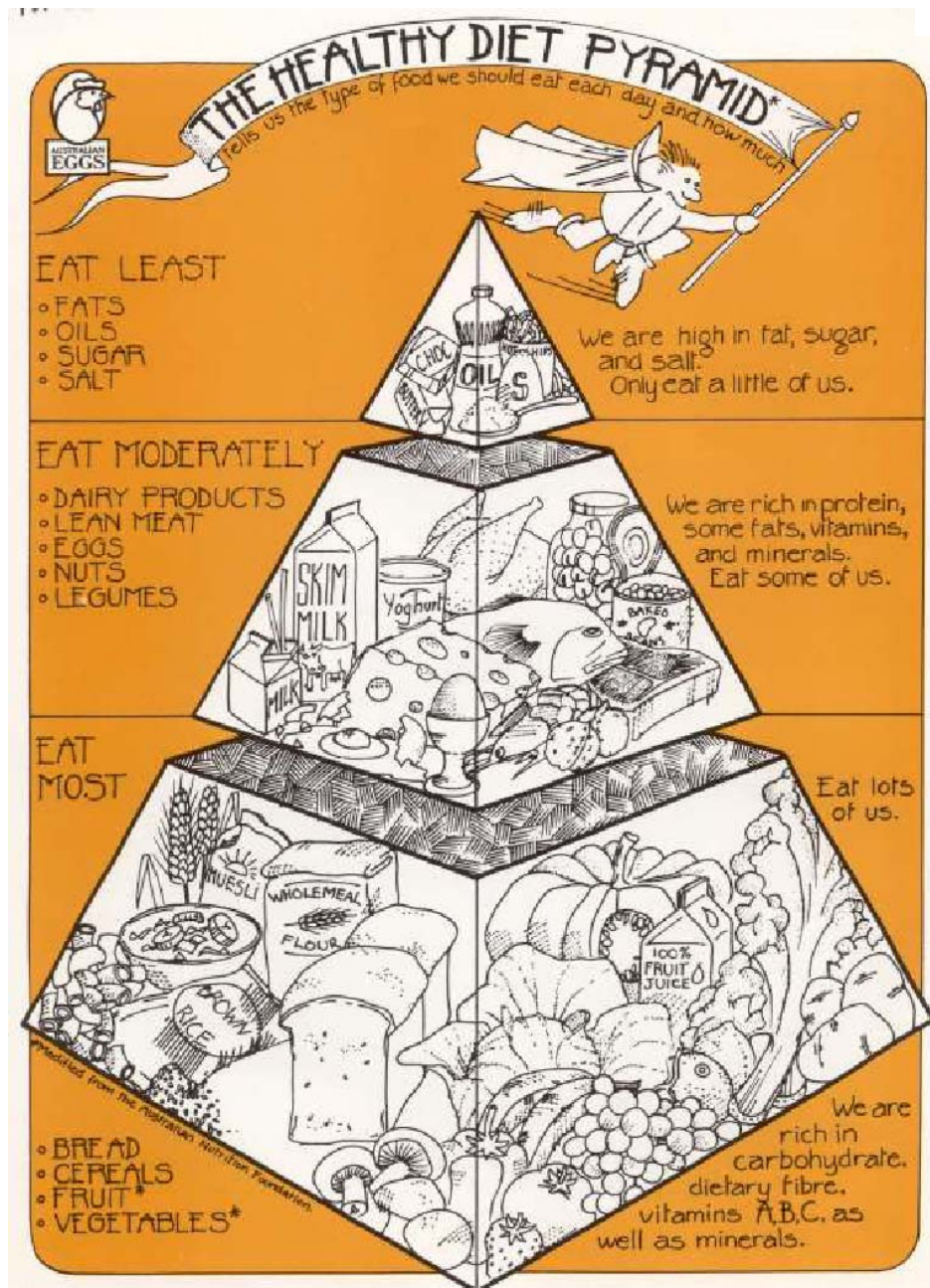
An average egg is 11% shell, 58% white and 31% yolk. The same proportions are true for eggs of different sizes.

EGGS WITH BROWN SHELLS ARE NO BETTER THAN THOSE WITH WHITE SHELLS

The colour of the egg has no relationship to the nutritional value of the egg.

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Reference

Paul, A.A., Southgate, D.A.T., McCance and Widdowson's: The Composition of Foods, 4th Edition, H.M.S.O., London, 1978.