

## Part 5, Chapter 56: Eggs and Cholesterol

Eggs are a bit of a nutritional conundrum, and so are included as a separate subject.

In the movie “Rocky” there’s a scene where Sylvester Stallone is shown breaking eggs into a glass and—it gags me to think about it—drinking the egg mixture raw. Supposedly he did so for the protein content which, admittedly, in raw form would be more easily assimilated than if cooked. Given the conditions that chickens, layers as they are called, are raised in, however, it’s also a great way to get salmonella poisoning, too. I have to admit that the first time I seen this scene, I just about threw up.



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It is true that eggs do have a significant amount of protein. Each large egg contains 6.3 grams of complete protein<sup>{2}</sup> and 550 mg of cholesterol.<sup>{3}</sup> Beyond the fact that most eggs come from tortured chickens, it’s the seriously high cholesterol content that I take issue with.

That said, unless I have to use an egg in a recipe, I hardly ever eat them. Emmale, on the other hand, considers them a viable protein source. From Articles and Multimedia, an article titled “Five Reasons Eggs are Good For You and Five Egg Dangers”.<sup>{4}</sup>

On the positive side ...

- Eggs are the perfect body composition food because they contain an amino acid lineup that can aid the development and strength and muscle.
- Eggs are rich in nutrients that make you smarter, in particular, choline in the egg yoke.
- Eggs are beneficial for bone health and prevention of fractures. Eggs provide both vitamin D and K critical for bone health.
- Eggs are an affordable superfood. As food sources go, an organic free range chicken egg is rich in selenium, lutein, and zeaxanthin.
- Eggs can be a delicious part of a diet designed for fat loss because they are satiating [Emmale’s claim] and reduce hunger.

On the not so positive side, and the source takes issue with each of these points ...

- Some associated studies show ill health effects of eating eggs, such as a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. It needs to be noted that there are many foods on the Standard American Diet that can have these same results.
- Eggs are packed with saturated fat and cholesterol which can create heart disease problems. For eggs alone, this a debatable question. Your body naturally produces cholesterol and the saturated fat content is minimal. I would personally be much more concerned with hydrogenated and trans fat oil than with eggs.<sup>{5}</sup>

(It needs to be noted that the research that made these findings debatable “were paid for

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by the American Egg Board, one by the Missouri Egg Merchandising Council, and one by the Egg Program of the California Department of Agriculture. Support for the sixth study was not identified ...<sup>{6}</sup> Too, in a different study “at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Mark Hegstead ... [found] that each 100 milligrams of egg yolk cholesterol raised blood cholesterol levels in adult men an average of four to five milligrams.<sup>{7}</sup>)

- There are certain situations in which the high cholesterol and the fat content of eggs will increase inflammation and increase the risk of heart disease. This is especially true if you eat meat, chicken, pork, milk and cheese. On 90%-100% vegan diet, the risk is minimal.
- Eggs are often contaminated with salmonella and it's better to avoid them. The way “Rocky” drinks them I would agree. The biggest issue: Know your source. Too, cooking does kill salmonella.
- Eggs are allergenic and should be avoided, especially by pregnant woman. The fact is that allergies can be caused by a lot of things. Eggs could be an issue but products such as milk and cheese would more likely be a far worse one.<sup>{8}</sup>

Having said all this, if they are free range organic eggs from happy chickens living on a traditional farm, my thinking is that a limited number of eggs won't do any appreciable harm. At the same time, absolutely avoid commercially produced factory farm eggs—for many reasons, not the least of which is that doing so supports the barbaric way the chickens are raised.

Still, one doesn't need eggs. The amino acids found in egg protein can all be found in various vegetables. Of the nutritional content, the same can be said of fresh fruits and vegetables—and to a greater degree. Of the cholesterol, some sources say it does no harm; others are not so sure. Personally, I can't imagine that it is good for your health.

The egg industry is hardly an unbiased player in this discussion.

The egg industry has also produced advertising campaigns designed to deny the saturated fat and cholesterol problems arising from consumption of their product. Of all foods, eggs are the highest in cholesterol, but the egg industry has not been one to stand by and let a fact like that take a bite out of its profits.<sup>{9}</sup>

The issue ultimately ended up in court. There followed a lengthy court battle, in which the egg producers tried, among other rationalizations, to defend their ad campaign under the First Amendment guarantee of free speech. But the judge wasn't convinced; in his 101-page decision, he called the statements made by the National Commission on Egg Nutrition “false, misleading, deceptive and unfair.”

Ruled Judge Ernest Barnes: “There exists a substantial body of competent and reliable scientific evidence that eating eggs increases the risk of heart attacks or heart disease. This evidence is systematic, consistent, strong and congruent.”<sup>{10}</sup>

It was not a good day for the egg industry. One might say that they ended up with egg on their face. I agree with the judge.

Like so many questionable foods, I think that if you keep eggs within the 5%-10% part of non-vegan foods in your diet, they won't do any appreciable harm. I still don't think they do you any good, but the critical issue is that any potentially harmful effect be kept to a minimum.