

Eggs : unscrambling the facts / British Egg Information Service.

Contributors

British Egg Information Service.

Publication/Creation

London : British Egg Information Service, [between 1990 and 1999?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/an57m8dp>

License and attribution

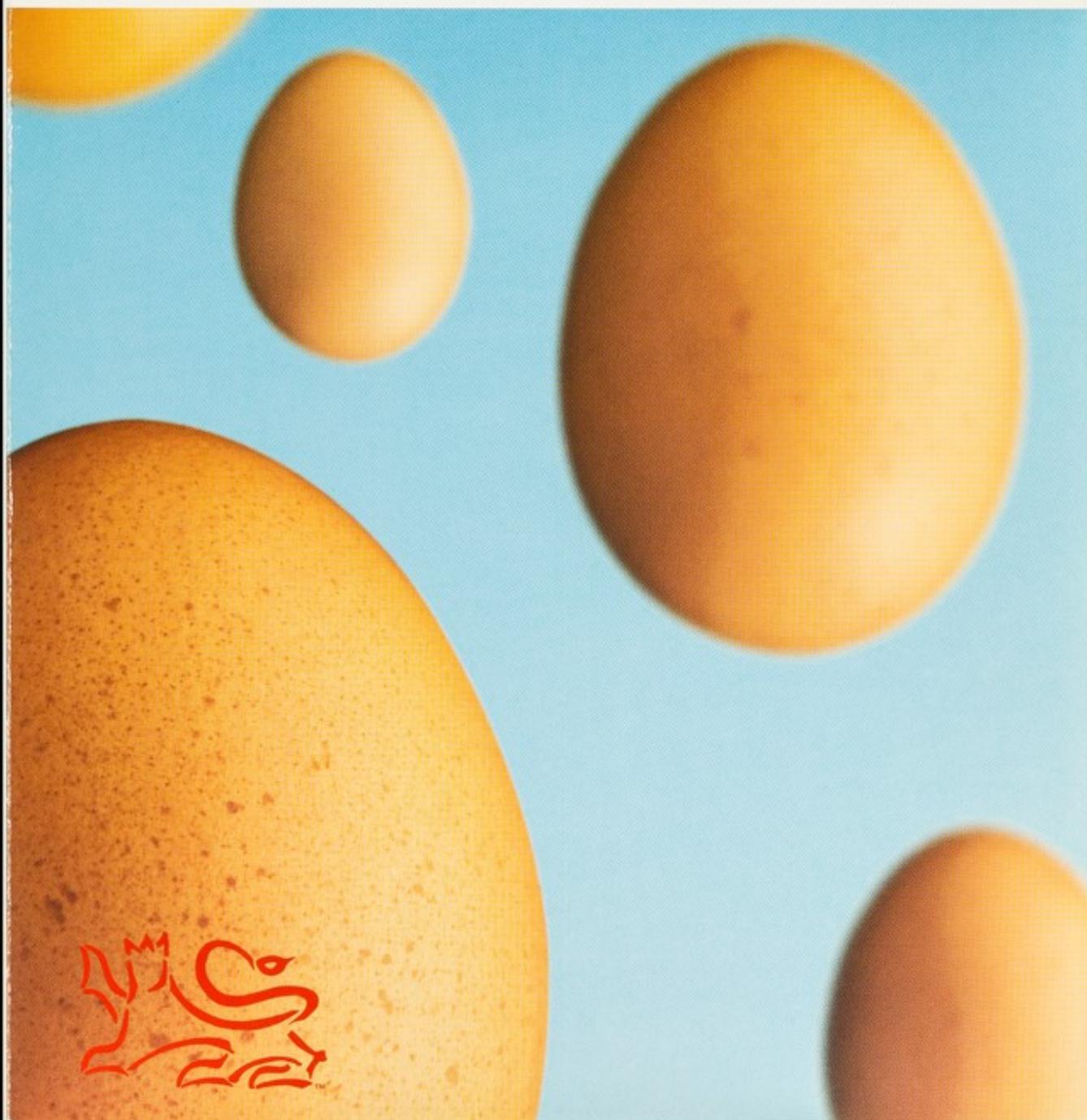
Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).

**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

eggs

unscrambling the facts



Introduction by Dr Juliet Gray PhD SRD, Consultant Nutritionist

All the food scares in recent years have made us rather wary of what we eat and feed to the family and have generated much confusion and unnecessary anxiety.

Because of concerns about cholesterol and about salmonella, some people have become less confident about eating eggs. This leaflet sets out to show you that, provided eggs are handled properly and combined with the right mix of other foods, they have a valuable role in a healthy diet for all the family.

What is a healthy diet?

No single food can provide all we need to stay healthy - we should select a varied mix of foods every day to ensure the right balance.



Source: Health Education Authority

This plate shows the main four groups of food and the proportions to choose - with bread, cereals and potatoes, vegetables and fruit forming an important part of a healthy diet. The model also shows the need to select more of the higher fibre cereals and the lower fat varieties of milk, dairy products and meat.

The fifth smaller group contains foods rich in fats and sugars and the advice here is moderation! Biscuits, pastries, cakes, sweets and fatty spreads, for example, need not be excluded from a healthy diet, but intake should be limited.

What about younger children?

"The provision of adequate dietary energy to ensure normal growth and development should be a principal determinant of the diets of children under five years of age." **Department of Health COMA Report on Weaning and the Weaning Diet (1994)**

Babies and toddlers have a high energy and nutrient requirement for growth, but a relatively limited capacity for food. Children under two need the fat in foods for energy and reduced fat dairy products such as skimmed milks are not suitable.

A diet containing too many high fibre cereals, vegetables and fruit is not suitable either. It fills them up too quickly so that they may not get enough energy, vitamins and minerals. Even up to the age of five, some children can have quite limited appetites and may require higher fat, less bulky food to satisfy their needs.

Using eggs as part of a healthy diet

Eggs are a good alternative to meat or fish. They are an excellent source of protein - one of the cheapest available - and are rich in vitamins A, D, E and B group.

Eggs are also rich in minerals including iron, but you need to eat or drink something containing vitamin C in the same meal - a glass of orange juice, tomatoes, potatoes or green vegetables - to enable the iron to be used by the body.

The fact that eggs are such a good source of so many essential nutrients means that they are especially nutritious for children of all ages who need these nutrients for growth.

What about cholesterol?

"...research has shown that eating foods which contain a lot of fat, especially saturated fat, has a much greater effect in pushing up the blood cholesterol level than dietary cholesterol." **British Heart Foundation**

Cholesterol is a waxy type of fat that is made by the liver. It is essential to the construction of body cells and hormones and is naturally present in the blood.

When there is too much cholesterol in the blood it can gradually work its way into the artery walls, making them narrower. Narrow arteries slow down the flow of blood to the heart or possibly stop the flow completely, resulting in a coronary thrombosis or heart attack.

References to cholesterol can be confusing. **Blood cholesterol** is the level of cholesterol in your blood stream - high intakes of fat, especially saturates, encourage the liver to produce more blood cholesterol.

Some people inherit the tendency to increased blood cholesterol levels and may be more susceptible to the effects of dietary fats. If there is a strong family history of heart disease, make sure you discuss this with your doctor.

Dietary cholesterol is found in foods including eggs and shellfish.

So what does this mean for my diet?

In the past it was thought that people should limit the number of eggs eaten because they are rich in dietary cholesterol. We now know that eating saturated fat (in which eggs are relatively low) is more influential in raising blood cholesterol than eating dietary cholesterol. Research shows that people on a healthy diet can eat an egg a day without raising blood cholesterol levels.

To cut down on fat, especially saturates, eat less fatty meats, full fat dairy products, pastry, cakes and biscuits, and use only small amounts of fat and oil for cooking and spreading. There is increasing evidence that eating more vegetables and fruit may protect against heart disease too.

Heart disease risk is also influenced by other factors. Not smoking, becoming more physically active and maintaining a suitable weight are all important.

And what about salmonella?

Concerns about salmonella in relation to eggs arose during the late 1980s. However, if handled correctly, the chances of someone becoming infected from a single egg are very small indeed and most people can continue to enjoy soft cooked eggs if they follow the handling advice below.

The Department of Health advises that recipes for uncooked dishes using raw eggs should be avoided. Eggs can be introduced into a baby's diet from the age of six months, but they must be cooked until both the yolk and the white are solid. Pregnant women, elderly people, and anyone weakened by chronic illness should also avoid lightly cooked eggs.

When handling eggs always follow these important steps:

- Buy eggs from a reputable retailer where they will have been transported and stored at the correct temperature (below 20°C).
- Look for the Lion mark on the egg box - it shows that the eggs have been produced to even higher standards than required by law.
- Place eggs in a refrigerator after purchase and store eggs separately from other foods.
- Make sure you use eggs by the "best before" date shown on the egg or box.
- Wash hands before and after handling eggs.
- Discard cracked or dirty eggs.
- Consume cooked egg dishes as soon as possible after cooking or store in a refrigerator.

