

Lifting the limits : the facts about eggs & cholesterol / British Egg Information Service ; foreword by Dr. Hilary Jones.

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Publication/Creation

London : British Egg Information Service, 2009.

Persistent URL

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lifting the limits

the facts about eggs
& cholesterol



Dr Hilary Jones

“Enjoy eggs
without counting!”





foreword by Dr Hilary Jones

An estimated 2.6 million people are living with heart disease in the UK today and coronary heart disease remains the country's biggest cause of death.

Many factors influence your chance of developing heart disease. Some can't be changed, such as family history and increasing age. However you can significantly reduce the risk presented by other factors – including smoking, lack of exercise, obesity, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol – by changing your lifestyle.

Although we know that high blood cholesterol is an important risk factor for heart disease, there has been some confusion as to its causes, with many people still thinking

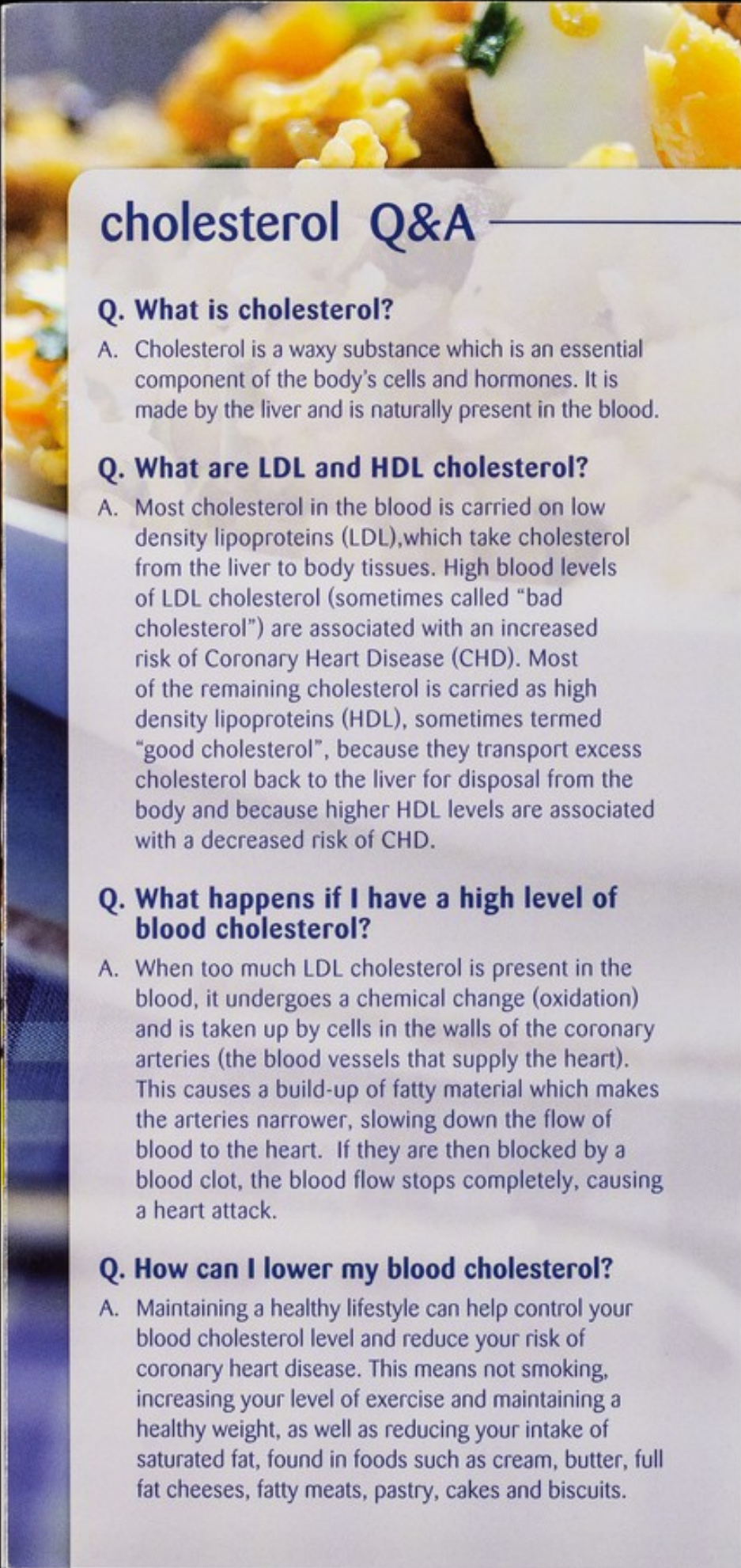
that they need to limit their intake of foods like eggs that contain cholesterol.

In fact, only around one-third of the cholesterol in the body comes from the diet (our bodies make the rest) and we now know that the most important dietary factor is saturated fat, not dietary cholesterol.

Health experts worldwide have therefore lifted their previous limits on egg consumption, emphasising instead the need to reduce intake of foods high in saturated fat.

As an egg-lover myself, I am delighted to help set the record straight and encourage more people to enjoy eggs every day, without needing to count them!





cholesterol Q&A

Q. What is cholesterol?

- A. Cholesterol is a waxy substance which is an essential component of the body's cells and hormones. It is made by the liver and is naturally present in the blood.

Q. What are LDL and HDL cholesterol?

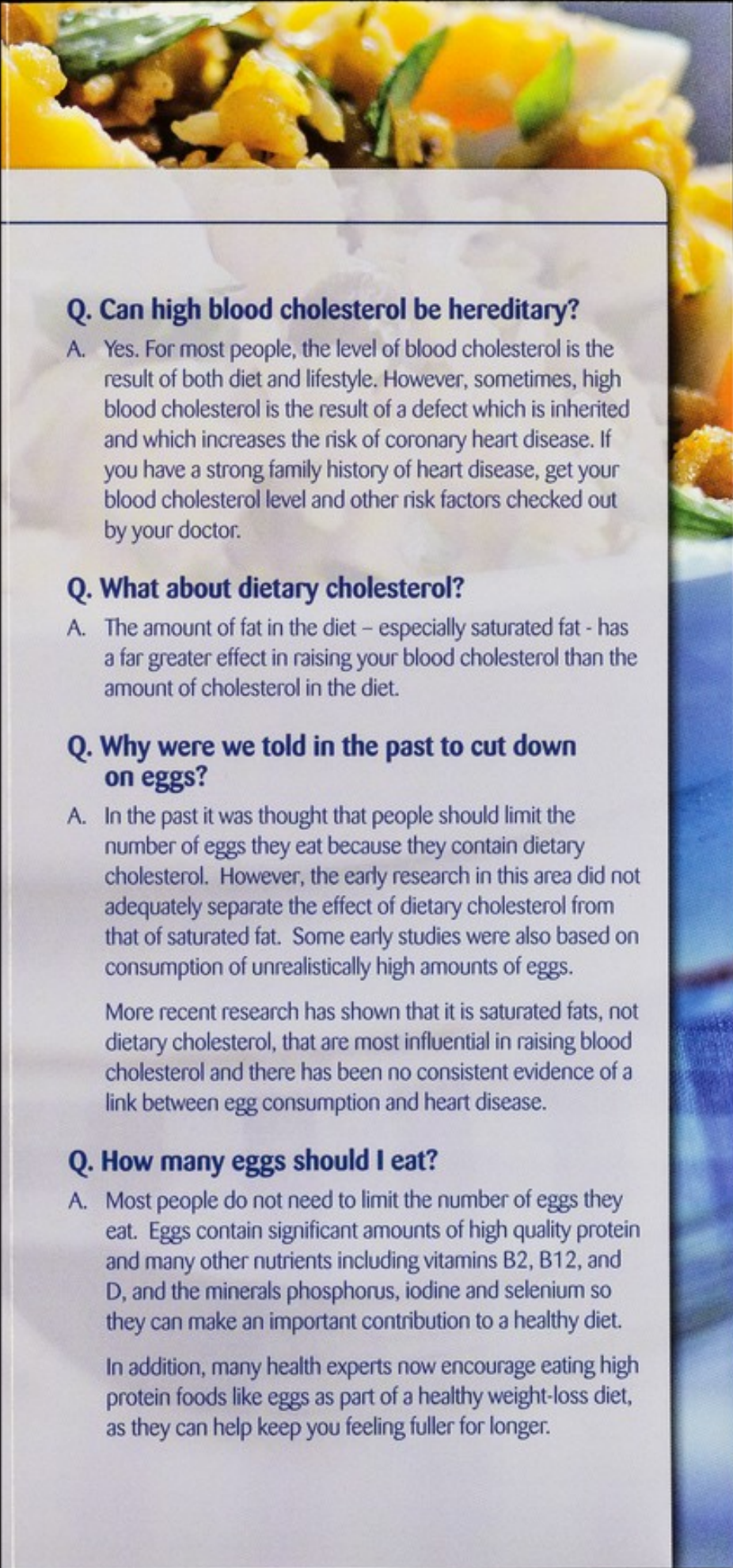
- A. Most cholesterol in the blood is carried on low density lipoproteins (LDL), which take cholesterol from the liver to body tissues. High blood levels of LDL cholesterol (sometimes called "bad cholesterol") are associated with an increased risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). Most of the remaining cholesterol is carried as high density lipoproteins (HDL), sometimes termed "good cholesterol", because they transport excess cholesterol back to the liver for disposal from the body and because higher HDL levels are associated with a decreased risk of CHD.

Q. What happens if I have a high level of blood cholesterol?

- A. When too much LDL cholesterol is present in the blood, it undergoes a chemical change (oxidation) and is taken up by cells in the walls of the coronary arteries (the blood vessels that supply the heart). This causes a build-up of fatty material which makes the arteries narrower, slowing down the flow of blood to the heart. If they are then blocked by a blood clot, the blood flow stops completely, causing a heart attack.

Q. How can I lower my blood cholesterol?

- A. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help control your blood cholesterol level and reduce your risk of coronary heart disease. This means not smoking, increasing your level of exercise and maintaining a healthy weight, as well as reducing your intake of saturated fat, found in foods such as cream, butter, full fat cheeses, fatty meats, pastry, cakes and biscuits.



Q. Can high blood cholesterol be hereditary?

- A. Yes. For most people, the level of blood cholesterol is the result of both diet and lifestyle. However, sometimes, high blood cholesterol is the result of a defect which is inherited and which increases the risk of coronary heart disease. If you have a strong family history of heart disease, get your blood cholesterol level and other risk factors checked out by your doctor.

Q. What about dietary cholesterol?

- A. The amount of fat in the diet – especially saturated fat - has a far greater effect in raising your blood cholesterol than the amount of cholesterol in the diet.

Q. Why were we told in the past to cut down on eggs?

- A. In the past it was thought that people should limit the number of eggs they eat because they contain dietary cholesterol. However, the early research in this area did not adequately separate the effect of dietary cholesterol from that of saturated fat. Some early studies were also based on consumption of unrealistically high amounts of eggs.

More recent research has shown that it is saturated fats, not dietary cholesterol, that are most influential in raising blood cholesterol and there has been no consistent evidence of a link between egg consumption and heart disease.

Q. How many eggs should I eat?

- A. Most people do not need to limit the number of eggs they eat. Eggs contain significant amounts of high quality protein and many other nutrients including vitamins B2, B12, and D, and the minerals phosphorus, iodine and selenium so they can make an important contribution to a healthy diet.

In addition, many health experts now encourage eating high protein foods like eggs as part of a healthy weight-loss diet, as they can help keep you feeling fuller for longer.

what the experts say

There is no recommended limit on how many eggs people should eat. Eggs are a good choice as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Food Standards Agency

One of the causes of high blood cholesterol levels among people in the UK is eating too much saturated fat. The cholesterol which is found in some foods such as eggs, liver, kidneys and some types of seafood eg prawns, does not usually make a great contribution to the level of cholesterol in your blood. It is much more important that you eat foods that are low in saturated fat.

British Heart Foundation

Since the 1980s research has consistently shown that the amount of saturates in the diet is a major influence on blood cholesterol levels. The level of cholesterol in the diet is no longer considered a priority when trying to reduce blood cholesterol levels.

British Dietetic Association

the good egg

To ensure that you are eating a balanced diet, eggs should be eaten in meals that contain plenty of vegetables, fruit and wholegrain cereals. The Eatwell plate shows the variety and the right proportions of foods you need to eat for a healthy, well-balanced diet.

the eatwell plate

Fruit and vegetables

Bread, other cereals
and potatoes



Meat, fish, eggs and
alternatives

Foods containing fat.
Foods and drinks
containing sugar

Milk and dairy foods

eatwell plate image supplied by kind permission of The Food Standards Agency

look for the Lion

Look for the British Lion Quality mark on the egg shell as well as on the egg pack as a guarantee that the eggs have been produced to the highest standards of food safety.



All Lion Quality eggs come from British hens vaccinated against salmonella and have a 'best before' date stamped on the shell as well as on the box as a guarantee of freshness.

British Egg Information Service 020 7052 8899

www.britegg.co.uk