**Word count 768**

**2016 12.06 Health Matters**

**Update on Eggs**

**Joe**

**This is Health Matters, with an update on eggs.**

**Kristen**

**Back in the 1990s, it was discovered that pregnant and nursing mothers in China routinely ate up to 12 eggs a day. Researchers studying breast milk there concluded that this huge consumption of eggs explained why their breast milk had high levels of DHA, a fatty acid in egg yolks that is essential to infant development.**

**Joe**

**That’s a lot of egg to consume. And it sure contradicts the long-standing but now dismissed recommendation of not eating more than two or three eggs a week. Science now agrees that eggs are valuable food whether or not you’re pregnant. The cholesterol in them is balanced with a nutrient that prevents it from forming deposits in the arteries.**

**Taushona**

**Some years back the New England Journal of Medicine published a story about a Denver man who ate 24 soft-boiled eggs a day for 15 years. A researcher from the University of Colorado found that the man had normal blood cholesterol and showed no signs of heart disease.**

**Kristen**

**Yet eggs have the highest amount of cholesterol per unit weight of all common foods. The exceptions are liver and brains, which have more cholesterol. There are a number of studies that show eliminating eggs from the diet does not lower the risk of heart disease. In fact, several studies with two groups, one eating eggs and the other eating no eggs showed that the no-eggs group had a higher death rate from heart attacks and strokes.**

**Joe**

**Chicken eggs are considered the most complete protein food. The amino acid complex in eggs is so well proportioned that eggs are used as the reference point for judging the quality of protein in other foods. Eggs are one of the few food sources of vitamin D. And they are an excellent source of vitamin A, and the B vitamins thiamin and niacin.**

**Taushona**

**Huge quantities of eggs are used in therapy for severe burns. Because they are such an excellent source of the protein needed to rebuild skin. In one study, burn victim volunteers who were fed 18 eggs a day actually showed reduced levels of cholesterol.**

**Kristin**

**Maybe that’s because they were so full of eggs, they didn’t have room for any of the junk foods that are the real source of high cholesterol.**

**Joe**

**An ongoing scare about eggs is the risk of contracting Salmonella from eating eggs that aren’t thoroughly cooked. But the fact is that Salmonella organisms have always been in eggs. Not only that, our digestive tract has Salmonella organisms. Still, getting sick from Salmonella in eggs has been happening more frequently. Some claim that people get sick from Salmonella because commercial egg farms feed their chickens antibiotics.**

**Taushona**

**The danger of getting sick from raw or partially cooked factory farm eggs brings up a larger issue. Namely, what kind of eggs are best to eat. Of course, the best eggs come from your own chickens.**

**Kristen**

**The nutritional quality of free range chickens fed a quality diet that includes bugs and worms from pasture and garden are far superior to eggs that are mass produced. In fact, the nutrients that make eggs a superfood – the fatty acids – are almost wholly absent from factory farmed eggs.**

**Joe**

**It’s the same old story. Factory food is deficient in vital nutrients. And yes, quality food is more expensive. But if you can’t raise your own chickens, it’s worth buying the best eggs you can find.**

**Taushona**

**Every five years the government issues dietary guidelines. 2016 was one of those years. And the Obama Administration’s new dietary advisory specifically mentions eggs. Admitting that the government has been warning people against eggs for 40 years, the guidelines now state that “eggs can be part of a healthy eating pattern.”**

**Kristen**

**Because high quality eggs are such an excellent source of protein and other nutrients, eggs are a boon for families feeding elders who are not very interested in eating.**

**Taushona**

**If you’re worried about an elder not getting enough nutrients, eggs are a good solution. They can be fixed in a variety of ways. And can include portions of those fresh vegetables elders need as well.**

**Joe**

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**Sources and Links**

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