

12 Things That Happen to Your Body When You Eat Eggs. *By Grant Stoddard*

Eggs might just be the easiest, cheapest and most versatile way to up your protein intake.

Beyond easily upping your daily protein count—each 85-calorie egg packs a solid 7 grams of the muscle-builder—eggs also boost your health. They're loaded with amino acids, antioxidants and iron. Don't just reach for the whites, though; the yolks boast a fat-fighting nutrient called choline, so opting for whole eggs can actually help you trim down.

When you're shopping for eggs, pay attention to the labels. You should be buying organic, when possible. These are certified by the USDA and are free from antibiotics, vaccines and hormones. As for color, that's your call. The difference in color just varies based on the type of chicken—they both have the same nutritional value, says Molly Morgan, RD, a board certified sports specialist dietician based in upstate New York. Here are 12 incredible effects the mighty egg can have on the human body.

1) You'll boost your immune system.

If you don't want to play chicken with infections, viruses and diseases, add an egg or two to your diet daily. Just one large egg contains almost a quarter (22%) of your RDA of selenium, a nutrient that helps support your immune system and regulate thyroid hormones. Kids should eat eggs, especially. If children and adolescents don't get enough selenium, they could develop Keshan disease and Kashin-Beck disease, two conditions that can affect the heart, bones and joints.

2) You'll improve your cholesterol profile.

There are three ideas about cholesterol that practically everyone knows: 1) High cholesterol is a bad thing; 2) There are good and bad kinds of cholesterol; 3) Eggs contain plenty of it. Doctors are generally most concerned with the ratio of "good" cholesterol (HDL) to bad cholesterol (LDL). One large egg contains 212 mg of cholesterol, but this doesn't mean that eggs will raise the "bad" kind in the blood. The body constantly produces cholesterol on its own, and a large body of evidence indicates that eggs can actually improve your cholesterol profile. How? Eggs seem to raise HDL (good) cholesterol while increasing the size of LDL particles.

3) You'll reduce your risk of heart disease.

LDL cholesterol became known as "bad" cholesterol because LDL particles transport their fat molecules into artery walls, and drive atherosclerosis — basically, gumming up of the arteries. (HDL particles, by contrast, can *remove* fat molecules from artery walls.) But not all LDL particles are made equal, and there are various subtypes that differ in size. Bigger is definitely better — many studies have shown that people who have predominantly small, dense LDL particles have a higher risk of heart disease than people who have mostly large LDL particles. Here's the beauty part: Even if eggs tend to raise LDL cholesterol in some people, studies show that the LDL particles change from small and dense to large, slashing the risk of cardiovascular problems.

4) You'll have more get-up-and-go.

Just one egg contains about 15% of your RDA of vitamin B2, also called riboflavin. It's just one of eight B vitamins, which all help the body to convert food into fuel, which in turn is used to produce energy.

5) Your skin and hair will improve.

B-complex vitamins are also necessary for healthy skin, hair, eyes, and liver. (In addition to vitamin B2, eggs are also rich in B5 and B12.) They also help to ensure the proper function of the nervous system.

6) You'll protect your brain.

Eggs are brain food. That's largely because of an essential nutrient called choline. It's a component of cell membranes and is required to synthesize acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter. Studies have shown that a lack of choline has been linked to neurological disorders and decreased cognitive function. Shockingly, more than 90% of Americans eat less than the daily recommended amount of choline, according to a U.S. dietary survey.

7) You will save your life.

Among the lesser-known amazing things the body can do: It can make 11 essential amino acids, which are necessary to sustain life. Thing is, there are 20 essential amino acids that your body needs. Guess where the other 9 can be found? That's right. A lack of those 9 amino acids can lead to muscle wasting, decreased immune response, weakness, fatigue, and changes to the texture of your skin and hair.

8) You will have less stress and anxiety.

If you're deficient in the 9 amino acids that can be found in an egg, it can have mental effects. A 2004 study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* described how supplementing a population's diet with lysine significantly reduced anxiety and stress levels, possibly by modulating serotonin in the nervous system.

9) You will protect your peepers.

Two antioxidants found in eggs — lutein and zeaxanthin — have powerful protective effects on the eyes. You won't find them in a carton of Egg Beaters — they only exist in the yolk. The antioxidants significantly reduce the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts, which are among the leading causes of vision impairment and blindness in the elderly. In a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, participants who ate 1.3 egg yolks per day for four-and-a-half weeks saw increased blood levels of zeaxanthin by 114-142% and lutein by 28-50%!

10) You'll improve your bones and teeth.

Eggs are one of the few natural sources of Vitamin D, which is important for the health and strength of bones and teeth. It does this primarily by aiding the absorption of calcium. (Calcium, incidentally, is important for a healthy heart, colon and metabolism.)

11) You'll feel fuller and eat less.

Eggs are such a good source of quality protein that all other sources of protein are measured against them. (Eggs get a perfect score of 100.) Many studies have demonstrated the effect of high-protein foods on appetite. Simply put, they take the edge off. You might not be surprised to learn that eggs score high on a scale called the Satiety Index, a measure of how much foods contribute to the feeling of fullness.

12) You'll lose fat.

Largely because of their satiating power, eggs have been linked with fat loss. A study on this produced some remarkable results: Over an eight-week period, people ate a breakfast of either eggs or bagels, which contained the same amount of calories. The egg group lost 65% more body weight, 16% more body fat, experienced a 61% greater reduction in BMI and saw a 34% greater reduction in waist circumference!

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