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# *nutrition research update*

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May 2007

## **New Findings on Eggs and Heart Disease and Eggs in Pregnancy for Fetal Health featured at the Experimental Biology Conference in Washington, DC**

Poster presentations in the Washington Convention Center

Exhibit Hall:

*Balancing and Communicating Risks and Benefits Associated with Egg Consumption: a Relative Risk Study* (poster number D68)

Monday, April 30, 1:45 pm - 2:25 pm

**[See "Unscrambling" for more information >>](#)**

*Choline in the Diets of the US Population: NHANES, 2003-2004*

(poster number LB219)

Wednesday, May 2, 9 am - 10 am

**[See "Choline Gap" for more information >>](#)**

## **research round-up: benefits and risks of eggs in perspective**

### **"Unscrambling" the Egg-Heart Disease Link**

- A new study abstract presented at the Experimental Biology Conference, *Balancing and Communicating Risks and Benefits Associated with Egg Consumption: A Relative Risk Study*, shows that eggs' contribution to coronary heart disease (CHD) is insignificant when compared to other CHD risk factors such as age, male sex, genetics, smoking, high blood



### **a word from don**

**It is becoming evident that the benefits of increased egg consumption far outweigh the risks. New evidence is beginning to crack the link between dietary cholesterol and heart disease.**

**Additionally, eggs contribute many essential nutrients to the diet, especially choline for optimal fetal health. As this new research illustrates, limiting dietary cholesterol – which generally translates to egg restrictions – may be negatively impacting the health and well-being of certain subsets of the population by inadvertently limiting essential nutrients.**

**Donald J. McNamara, PhD  
Executive Director Egg**

cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity and overweight, diabetes, alcohol and stress.(1)

- A thorough scientific review of the major studies concerning heart disease causation found eggs contributed to just 0.6% of males' and 0.4% of females' CHD risk, when other risk factors were assumed.(1)

**Nutrition Center**

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## Closing the Choline Gap

- Choline plays a significant role in fetal development. Of great concern is the documented deficiency among pregnant and lactating women and the possible increased risk for neural tube defects. Additionally, choline is an essential nutrient for fetal brain development.
- A new study from Iowa State University presented at the Experimental Biology Conference, *Choline in the Diets of the US Population: NHANES 2003-2004*, shows that many Americans – and especially pregnant and breastfeeding moms – are not eating enough choline.
- According to the study by Jensen, et al, choline consumption is far below recommended levels. In fact, only 10 percent or less of pregnant women, women, older children and men consume close to the recommended amounts of choline.(2)
- These new findings are consistent with Zeisel, et al, showing a significant gap for both men and women exists between the current and recommended intake levels of choline. In this study, the daily gap between actual and recommended intake is upwards of 26 percent and 43 percent for women and men, respectively, and upwards of 30 percent and 43 percent for pregnant and lactating women, respectively.(5)
- Foods like eggs that are an excellent source of choline can help fill this gap. Eggs are one of the main food sources of choline in the diet; one egg each day closes the choline gap for children age nine and over, pregnant women and other adults.

### that's a fact

Eggs are an excellent source of choline and one of the most commonly consumed sources in the diet.(5) In fact, one egg added to the diet of pregnant women can help close the choline gap by 40 percent points.(2)

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### Benefits of Egg Consumption Outweigh Questionable Risks

The long-standing hypotheses linking dietary cholesterol found in eggs and heart health are beginning to crack. Emerging research shows consuming a daily egg doesn't contribute to the risk of heart disease, but does contribute many essential nutrients to one's diet.(1,2) Eggs are a good source of protein and excellent source of choline, a vital nutrient for healthy fetal development. (3,4) In addition, eggs are a significant source of many other important nutrients including iron, riboflavin, folate, and vitamins B12, D and E.(3)

### in other science news

- New evidence recently reported in the Medical Science Monitor supports the body of evidence showing no increased risk for coronary artery diseases when consuming one egg daily. This study also shows no increased risk for either ischemic or other strokes.(6)
- In the same study, women were more likely to report either no egg consumption or less than one egg consumed per week. This further highlights the importance of increased consumption of rich dietary choline sources – such as eggs – for this population.(6)

### References

1. Tran N, Barraj L, Mink P, McNamara D. Balancing and Communicating Risks and Benefits Associated With Egg Consumption A Relative Risk Study. Health Sciences, Exponent, 1730 Rhode Island NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20036. Abstract presented at Experimental Biology 2007.
2. Jensen HH, Batres-Marquez SP, Carriquiry A, Schalinske K. Choline in the Diets of the US Population: NHANES 2003-2004. Abstract presented at Experimental Biology 2007.
3. Meister, K. The role of eggs in the diet. Available at: [http://www.acsh.org/publications/pubID.493/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.acsh.org/publications/pubID.493/pub_detail.asp). Accessed on April 9, 2007.
4. Egg Nutrition Center. Choline Facts. Available at:

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5. Cho E, Zeisel SH, Jacques P, Selhub J, Dougherty L, Colditz GA, Willett WC. Dietary choline and betaine assessed by food-frequency questionnaire in relation to plasma total homocysteine concentration in the Framingham Offspring Study. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. April 2006; 83(4): 905-911.
6. Qureshi AI, Suri MFK, Ahmed S, Nasar A, Divani AA, Kirmani JF. Regular egg consumption does not increase the risk of stroke and cardiovascular diseases. Medical Science Monitor. 2007; 13(1): CR1-8.

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