

Great Tucker

Recent research indicates that Australia is currently faced with a high percentage of people who have poor diets. It has been found that over 60% of men and over 50% of women are overweight or obese. The percentage of obese men has almost doubled in the past 20 years. The number of children who have obesity has also increased greatly in the past 20 years. At present about 50% of 10 - 14 year olds are obese.

Many people believe that drinking lots of soft drink such as coke and fanta is okay for you, but eating eggs (especially on a regular basis) is not healthy because of the perceived levels of fat or cholesterol in eggs. It's difficult to know why people have these perceptions; however they are not based on facts.

Regular soft drink consumption has been proven to be a major cause of obesity in young people. As a result of this, the NSW government has banned the sale of soft drink in all public schools from 2007 onwards. Eggs, on the other hand, have been proven to be highly beneficial in the diet of most people.

Many people believe that eggs hinder weight loss and they are a contributing factor to high blood pressure and heart attack. These beliefs have been proven false and are now myths.

We now have research that clearly shows eggs do not have high levels of saturated fat. They are high in protein, contain 18 vitamins and minerals and are low in kilojoules (kJ). In fact, one serving of eggs (two normal sized eggs) contains about the same amount of kJ as two apples or two slices of wholegrain bread. Furthermore, eggs are high in satiety which refers to their ability to satisfy hunger. As a result of providing high satiety, high levels of protein, and many essential vitamins and minerals, eggs are now considered an invaluable component of a healthy diet.

Recent trends towards diets high in protein and low in carbohydrates makes eggs an ideal component of any weight loss program. Studies carried out by *Food & Nutrition Australia* and numerous other research organisations have demonstrated that well balanced diets including eggs are actually assisting with weight loss programs.

It is now known that eggs are particularly beneficial in the diets of young people, the elderly, vegetarians, pregnant women and athletes. This is because these groups are often severely lacking in many essential vitamins and minerals, many of which the egg contains.

A few important facts include: (one serving of eggs - two eggs)

- Eggs provide 22% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) of vitamin A for adults and 30% RDI for children.
 - Vitamin A is needed for healthy skin, eyes and a strong immune system.
- Eggs provide approximately 10% of the RDI for vitamin E.
- Eggs provide about 25% of the RDI for folate.
 - Folate is especially important for pregnant women.
- Eggs provide about 60% of the RDI of B12.
 - B12 is needed for healthy red blood cells.
- Eggs provide a valuable source of iron.
 - This is essential for groups at risk of iron deficiency such as vegetarians, toddlers, pregnant woman and athletes.
- Eggs contain the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin.
 - These antioxidants reduce the risk of eye cataracts and age related macular degeneration which leads to blindness in the elderly. They may assist with recovery after exercise by reducing muscle and cell damage.
- Eggs contain Omega-3.
 - Omega-3 promotes a healthy heart, good blood vessels and has anti-inflammatory properties.

Eggs are beneficial to all healthy people. Only those with egg allergies need to avoid eating them.

1. What is one of the main health problems in current society?

2. Name one of the major causes of obesity in young people?

3. What has the NSW government done to counteract this problem?

4. List three reasons why eggs are good for you.

5. How many kJ is one serving of eggs equivalent to?

6. How many eggs are in one serving?

7. Name an Australian organisation that has found eggs to be of value in a healthy weight loss program?

8. How much vitamin A do eggs provide children and why is this important?
