

## On nutrition: Eggs-tra nutrition

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We've identified Easter with eggs for a very long time, according to historians.

Ever wonder why? Through the ages, [eggs](#) were gifted to others in the spring to celebrate the season of new growth. And if you've ever

witnessed a baby chick emerging from its shell, you can see how eggs eventually became a symbol of new life celebrated by Christians at Easter.

Nutritionally, eggs are considered one of the highest quality protein foods on the planet. Yet for more than 40 years, they took a beating from health experts due to their high cholesterol content. That was when the prevailing evidence pointed to assumptions that diets high in cholesterol were bad for the heart.

Then in 2013, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology unscrambled decades of research and concluded that "egg consumption is not associated with cardiovascular (heart) disease or (the risk of dying from [heart disease](#)) in the general population."

Today, there is no specific advice to limit cholesterol in our diets. And eggs are now recommended as part of a healthful diet in the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Think about it. Within one little eggshell are all the nutrients needed to produce a new life. That includes numerous vitamins and minerals including vitamin B12, selenium and biotin.

And don't forget choline—a not-so-easy nutrient to get in other foods—that is vital for maintaining the structure and function of every cell in the body. Choline is especially important during the development of the brain during pregnancy and young childhood. Even as we age, research has found that [choline](#) is essential to maintain memory and other brain functions.

Don't assume that naturally colored brown, blue or green shells are more nutritious, however. Egg color is determined by the the breed of chicken,

not nutrient content, say experts.

Of course, all this good [nutrition](#) comes only when we handle raw and cooked eggs wisely. Eggs need to be refrigerated within 36 hours of being laid, says the Food and Drug Administration. And they should stay refrigerated.

That's especially important once they are cooked, says the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. If you're cooking and dyeing Easter eggs, for example, don't leave them unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours. And of course have your little ones wash their hands before they handle the eggs.

If kiddos are hunting for real eggs, hide them off the ground and in places that are protected from dirt and other sources of bacteria, say these experts.

Once the hunt is over, rinse and put them back in the fridge. Then, within a week, get cracking with these brightly colored symbols of new life (egg salad anyone?).

Be a good egg and have a very blessed Easter!

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