

Koslo's Korner

Eggs: Good nutrition bang for you

While you may be getting more than enough protein in your diet are you consuming enough sources of high-quality protein?

Athletes usually get more than enough dietary protein but the sources can often be high in saturated fat (cheese and red meat) or too engineered (powdered protein supplements). Researchers suggest that the protein in eggs makes a valuable contribution to muscle strength, helps to satisfy hunger and provides a source of sustained energy. This is because eggs are naturally rich in leucine which is an essential amino acid that plays an important role in how muscles use glucose making them a valuable food for men and women undergoing endurance training.

Eggs are a naturally nutrient-dense food and contain almost every essential vitamin and mineral needed by humans. A large egg has about 74 calories and more than 6 grams of high-quality protein that is easily digested and absorbed by the body. Eggs are also an excellent source of choline, a nutrient that helps prevent birth defects, and a good source of riboflavin. The egg white consists primarily of protein while the yolk contains protein, choline, folate, lutein, zeaxanthin, fat, and vitamin D.

Each egg is separately wrapped in its own shell requiring no weighing or measuring and can be prepared in thousands of ways. Eggs are also naturally low in sodium and the yolk has a favorable mix of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and just 1.5 grams of saturated fat. And while many Americans still avoid eggs for fear of dietary cholesterol, 30 years of research has never linked egg consumption to heart disease. Additionally, the American Heart Association no longer places a limit on the amount of eggs a person can consume per week.

In an effort to meet consumer demand a number of specialty eggs are currently on the market offering an array of nutritional choices. Omega-3 eggs are laid by hens fed a special diet containing omega-3 rich flaxseed or marine algae. Cage free, organic, free-range and certified humane eggs all have the same nutritional content but the conditions under which the chickens are kept meet specific USDA standards. Brown eggs are no different from white eggs and are just from a different breed of hen.

The high-quality protein in eggs can be part of a balanced sports diet by aiding in muscle tissue repair and growth. The protein in eggs provides steady and sustained energy and would be a good addition to breakfast for long-lasting satiety and for post-workout muscle protein synthesis. Don't forget to pair that protein with a good dose of carbohydrates and fluids for the best recovery. So next time you are wondering what to have with that bagel try an egg or two or give this "egg-ceptional" oatmeal recipe a try courtesy of the American Egg Board:

Apple-Cinnamon Oatmeal with an Egg Boost

1 egg
1/3 cup low fat milk (or soymilk)

1 pkg apples and cinnamon instant oatmeal

¼ cup vanilla yogurt

1. Beat egg and milk in 2-cup microwave safe bowl until blended. Stir in oatmeal.
2. Microwave on high until liquid is absorbed and egg is set, 1 ½ to 2 minutes; stir. Top with yogurt.

Calories: 292, carbs: 40 g, protein: 15 g.

References

American Egg Board (2010) <http://www.aeb.org/retailers/nutrition-facts>

Egg Nutrition Center (2010) <http://www.enc-online.org/>

Layman, DK, & Rodriguez, NR (2009). Egg protein as a source of power, strength and energy. *Nutr Today* 44(1), pp 43048, Jan/Feb 2009.

Have a nutrition question? Email it to: info@koslosnutritionalsolutions.com

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