

Healthy, Well Nourished Population

Cholesterol in Eggs

Issue

Americans have eliminated sources of high dietary cholesterol to reduce their risk of heart disease. In particular, they have cut their consumption of eggs. But do scientific studies show that reducing cholesterol in the diet correspondingly reduces cholesterol in the blood?

What has been done?

A meta-analysis was conducted at The University of Arizona using 224 cholesterol studies completed during the past 25 years. The research concluded that eating cholesterol has a minimal effect on blood cholesterol. Saturated animal fat has a greater impact on plasma cholesterol than dietary cholesterol, according to Wanda Howell, the lead researcher for the study. "For most people, dietary cholesterol does not raise blood cholesterol levels."

The researchers are continuing to maintain the database on the effects of dietary cholesterol and are currently looking at potential differences in egg cholesterol vs other food cholesterol. Preliminary analyses indicate that egg cholesterol may have even less effect than other sources.

The study has been included in the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (DARE), a publicly available database in the United Kingdom, located at the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York.

Impact

According to Howell, "Healthy individuals with normal blood cholesterol levels should now feel free to enjoy foods like eggs in their diet every day." As a protein source, eggs are cheaper than most meat

products, which would reduce food bills for people who begin to buy eggs more often in place of meat. A rise in egg consumption in the United States would directly affect the egg industry through increased sales and an increased demand for production.

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