

Eggs, cholesterol and heart health

What the science shows



Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading health issues in Australia.¹ Many factors can increase someone's risk of heart disease including age, family history, high blood pressure, body weight, diabetes, smoking status, physical activity, and what we eat.¹

While cholesterol often gets blamed as a cause of heart disease, it's only one part of a much bigger picture. Our overall lifestyle and long-term eating habits matter far more than any single food or nutrients alone.

Rethinking eggs and heart health

For many years, people were told to limit egg consumption because they contain cholesterol. But scientific understanding has changed.

Large research studies have found:



Moderate egg consumption is not linked to higher rates of heart disease in the general population.² In fact, research has indicated that daily consumption of two eggs as part of a low-saturated fat diet lowers bad cholesterol (LDL cholesterol), which may reduce overall CVD risk.³



Dietary cholesterol (from foods like eggs) has much less effect on blood cholesterol than once believed. What you eat regularly is more important than individual foods.



Your overall diet quality, exercise levels, weight, and genetics have a much bigger impact on heart health. Heart disease risk comes from a combination of factors – there's no single cause.



When eggs are eaten as part of a heart-healthy pattern, they can contribute valuable nutrients without increasing heart disease risk.

References

- 1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Heart, stroke and vascular disease: Australian facts. Canberra: AIHW, Australian Government; 2025
- 2 Drouin-Chartier JP, Chen S, Li Y, et al. Egg consumption and risk of cardiovascular disease: three large prospective US cohort studies and updated meta-analysis. *BMJ*. 2020;368:m513.
- 3 Carter S, Hill AM, Yandell C, Wood L, Coates AM, Buckley JD. Impact of dietary cholesterol from eggs and saturated fat on LDL cholesterol levels: a randomized cross-over study. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2025 Jul 1;122(1):83-91.



What does a heart-healthy diet look like?

Diet plays a key role in heart health. Current nutrition guidance focuses on a whole-diet approach, rather than the restriction of specific foods, such as eggs.

A heart-healthy diet includes:

- ✓ Plenty of fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Wholegrain breads, cereals, rice and pasta
- ✓ Legumes, nuts, and seeds
- ✓ Eggs, fish and lean proteins
- ✓ Healthy, unsaturated fats such as olive oil

In contrast, a diet high in saturated fat, trans fat, added sugars and highly processed foods is associated with poorer cardiovascular outcomes.⁴



WHY EGGS DESERVE A PLACE IN A HEART HEALTHY DIET



Eggs are a **nutrient-dense food, providing 17 vitamins and nutrients**, including high quality protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, iodine, selenium, and choline.



A serve of two (60g) eggs contains **relatively small amounts of saturated fat** compared to other animal-derived protein-rich foods.



Most nutrition guidelines, in Australia and internationally, say that eggs can be **part of a healthy diet that supports cardiovascular health**.⁵



As with all foods, eggs should be considered within the context of **overall diet quality and lifestyle factors**.

References

⁴ National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: NHMRC; 2013.

⁵ Heart Foundation. Eggs and Heart Health Position Statement. National Heart Foundation of Australia.