

Eggs are a great source of nutrients

Balancing nutritional needs with acceptable calorie levels can be challenging. For cancer patients, as nutritional requirements often are increased, maintaining adequate nutrient levels also can be difficult. Eating a variety of nutrient-dense food is excellent advice for everyone.

Near the top of the nutrient-dense food list are whole eggs. Because eggs contain a balanced source of amino acids (building blocks of proteins), they are considered the gold standard by which all protein foods are measured.

Food packs protein

One large egg packs 6.25 grams of protein, 75 calories and 13 essential vitamins and minerals. Most of the protein is contained in the egg white, while vitamins, minerals, fats, carotenoids (orange/red/yellow pigments) and cholesterol are contained in the yolk.

One large egg contains about 213 milligrams of cholesterol, but the American Heart Association no longer restricts the number of eggs a person can eat, as long as that person's total cholesterol is kept to 300 milligrams per day. Years of cholesterol feeding studies show that dietary cholesterol has only a minimal effect, if any, on blood cholesterol levels.

Eggs are convenient to keep on hand:

- ; Enjoy a satisfying scrambled egg, omelet or frittata (an Italian omelet with diced vegetables and meats) in less than 15 minutes
- ; Mix eggs with other ingredients from all groups on the Food Guide Pyramid to make a versatile, complete meal
- ; Combine eggs with leftover vegetables, pasta or chicken for creative meals that are easy, inexpensive and nutritious

Eliminate risk of food-borne illness:

- ; Wash hands before and after handling raw eggs
- ; Separate raw eggs from other foods, especially those that will not be further cooked
- ; Store eggs in the carton in the coldest part of the refrigerator
- ; Cook eggs and egg dishes thoroughly; recipes containing eggs should be cooked to 160 degrees Fahrenheit