

Eating eggs not linked to high cholesterol

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Eating more than two eggs does not lead to higher serum cholesterol in teens, regardless of how little physical activity they do, a new study has found.

Researchers at the University of Granada analysed the link between egg intake in adolescents and the main risk factors for developing cardiovascular diseases, such as lipid profile, excess body fat, insulin resistance and high blood pressure.

"Health professionals traditionally insisted that eating eggs increased cholesterol levels, so in recent decades there has been a tendency to restrict intake championed by various public health organisations," Alberto Soriano Maldonado, primary author of the study, said.

However, the most recent research suggests that increased serum cholesterol is more affected by intake of saturated fats and trans fats - present in red meat, industrial baked goods, etc - than by the amount of cholesterol in the diet.

The results, part of the European study HELENA involving nine countries, demonstrated that eating larger amounts of egg is neither linked to higher serum cholesterol nor to worse cardiovascular health in adolescents, regardless of their levels of physical activity.

"The conclusions, published in the journal *Nutricion Hospitalaria*, confirm recent studies in healthy adults that suggest that an intake of up to seven eggs a week is not associated with an increased risk of developing cardiovascular diseases," said Soriano.

Researchers suggest reviewing dietary recommendations for adolescents, although they add that it would be useful to conduct similar research on a sample group with higher egg intake.

"Egg is a cheap food that is rich in very high-quality proteins, minerals, folates and B vitamins. Thus it can provide a large quantity of nutrients necessary for optimum development in adolescents," researchers said.

In 1973, the American Heart Association recommended limiting egg intake to a maximum of three per week, an idea that was accepted by health experts for years.

However, although the majority of foods rich in cholesterol are usually also rich in saturated fats, a medium-size egg contains 200 milligrammes of cholesterol but has more unsaturated fats than saturated fats and only has 70 calories.

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