

## Eggs provide necessary nutrients

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This week, local chickens hit the front page.

When it comes to nutrition, chickens usually are in. But in this case, they may be out.

Not everyone is into having live chickens for neighbors, which could happen if the City of Salem joins other cities and changes their code to allow as many as five chickens per dwelling to lay eggs on city property.

Usually chicken eggs, not the chickens themselves, are the subject of debate among health and nutrition professionals, though most probably would agree with Joe Bowersox, director of the Center for Sustainable Communities at Willamette University, when he said, "Eggs can provide a valuable and economical source of protein to families."

When it comes to nutrients, an egg provides roughly 7 grams of protein and all 13 essential amino acids for around 70 calories. This is about the same amount of protein as an ounce of meat. In addition, eggs are a good source of the essential fatty acid lecithin and a good source of choline, folate, lutein, zeaxanthin and vitamin D.

Choline has become an essential nutrient of interest during the past decade. Researchers have theorized choline deficiency may be tied to diseases such as cardiovascular disease, neural tube defects, dementia, Alzheimer's, and cancer. However, according to OSU's Linus Pauling Institute, current research on choline status and its effect on these diseases is not conclusive.

Eggs are the primary source of choline in our diet. One egg provides about 126 milligrams of choline.

Adequate intake levels for consumption of choline were set in 1998 by the Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board. American men older than 19 should consume 550 milligrams a day, while women should get 425 milligrams a day (up to 550 milligrams a day if breastfeeding).

When it comes to the fat in an egg and whether it's good or not, much is dependent on the type of feed the chicken receives. For example, when chickens are fed flaxseed, they produce eggs that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids that our diet typically lacks.

As the city sorts out its chicken policy, the nutrition world continues to debate how many eggs are OK to eat a week.

There is research supporting it's safe to eat eggs every day. Although the American Heart Association does not offer dietary recommendations on number of eggs to eat, it does say the target for total daily cholesterol is less than 300 milligrams. A whole egg contains about 212

### Learn more

See this story at StatesmanJournal.com for links to:

Choline facts

Egg recipes from The American Egg Board

American Heart Association diet and lifestyle recommendations

### Links

[http://pi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/othernuts/choline/index.html#food\\_source](http://pi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/othernuts/choline/index.html#food_source)

[www.incredibleegg.org](http://www.incredibleegg.org)

[www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=851](http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=851)

milligrams of cholesterol.

For the record, our family enjoys eggs for breakfast two to three times a week, usually scrambled.

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