



communicating Food for Health

October



CELEBRATE DESSERT MONTH!

FEATURE FRUIT IN EACH SWEET TREAT

Food News



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A study published in *Pediatrics* indicates that strict snack laws can help kids maintain a healthy weight.

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Do Eggs Raise LDL-C and Promote Atherosclerosis?

Well, if one took the recent CPE course made available online from the Egg Nutrition Council (ENC), one might have been persuaded that consuming eggs has little or no adverse impact on blood lipids and would be unlikely to promote atherosclerosis, heart disease, and stroke. The CPE course makes the same pseudoscientific arguments debunked by me in the September 2010 issue of *Communicating Food for Health*. That article was inspired by an article in the ENC's newsletter by Dr. Fernandez. Now Dr. Fernan-

dez at UConn has an ENC-sponsored CPE course pretending to educate RDs about how eggs have been unfairly demonized as promoters of atherosclerosis. Was I wrong?

Dr. Spence examined data from 1262 consecutive Canadian men and women (mean age 61.5) who had been evaluated at a clinic for atherosclerotic plaques in their carotid arteries. At the same time of their ultrasound study, they filled out questionnaires about their diets and other CVD risk factors. In linear multiple regression

(continued on next page)

The preponderance of research shows dietary cholesterol alters blood lipids in ways that damage arteries.

analysis, egg-yolk years remained significant predictors of baseline total plaque area (TPA) after adjustment for sex, serum total cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, diabetes, BMI, and pack-years of smoking. Dr. Spence also noted that egg yolk-years were more predictive of increased atherosclerotic plaque development than either fasting cholesterol level or BMI. [Spence JD, et al. Egg yolk consumption and carotid plaque. [http://www.atherosclerosis-journal.com/article/S0021-9150\(12\)00504-7/abstract](http://www.atherosclerosis-journal.com/article/S0021-9150(12)00504-7/abstract)]. If egg intake is of little or no concern for the development of atherosclerosis, as Dr. Fernandez's ENC CPE course suggests, then the increase in carotid plaque with increased egg yolk intake is pretty hard to explain. It is either an amazing statistical fluke or it appears that egg yolks may indeed be promoting the growth of atherosclerotic plaque. Even worse, they appear to be doing so in ways that are at least partially independent of fasting blood lipids.

ENC's Spin

An article written by Rod Abby and published online states "The ENC and AEB observed that subjects of the Canadian study with higher egg intakes tended to also be heavy smokers." Nice spin, but Rod Abby failed to mention that Dr. Spence's article found this supposed "tendency" was not even close to statistically significant. Indeed, had Rod Abby read the article, he may have noticed when it stated: "There was

no significant correlation between egg yolk consumption and smoking history." It appears that the ENC/AEB were attempting to spin the findings of this study to confuse the public (and perhaps some health professionals) in the same way the Tobacco Institute used to spin data from studies linking tobacco smoke with disease. Does this not suggest that commercial interests are not likely to be the most reliable sources of accurate scientific information, particularly when that data portrays what they are selling as being associated with ill health?

Actually, clinically significant atherosclerosis rarely develops when the diet is very low in fat and cholesterol. Data from the long-running Framingham Heart Study clearly show that, over the long term, elevated serum cholesterol levels (and especially nonHDL-C level) are the single best predictor of subsequent clinically significant coronary artery disease (CAD). It is true that 80-85% of the cholesterol in the typical American's blood is made in the liver and does not come directly from the diet. However, eliminating dietary cholesterol for someone eating about 600mg/day on average will lower serum cholesterol by at least 15% on average, assuming no other change in the diet. A controlled clinical of young, healthy "vegetarians" found increasing dietary cholesterol from 97mg/d to 418mg/day with eggs only increased LDL-C by an average of 12% in just 3 weeks. [Lancet, March

1984;1:647-9]. More recently, a carefully controlled clinical trial in Brazil examined the impact of adding either 3 egg whites or 3 whole eggs daily to the NCEP Step 2 diet for 25 healthy young men (age 17-22) for 15 days. With the egg whites, dietary cholesterol averaged only 174 mg/day, but with the whole eggs, dietary cholesterol averaged 804 mg/day. As a result, the average LDL-C level was only 86 mg/dl with the egg whites but 120 mg/dl with the 3 whole eggs daily. The researchers also reported that the high cholesterol diet, in addition to raising LDL-C by 40%, also significantly impaired the removal of chylomicron remnants. [Cesar TB, et al. High cholesterol intake modifies chylomicron metabolism in normolipidemic young men. *J Nutr* 2006; 136: 971-6]. There is also growing data suggesting that some of the damage done to arteries from eating cholesterol-rich foods comes from alterations of postprandial blood lipids. [Spence JD, et al. Dietary cholesterol and egg yolks not for patients at risk of vascular disease. *Can J Cardiol* 2010 Nov; 26: e336 -9].

Bottom Line: The evidence linking dietary cholesterol and egg consumption with higher LDL-C levels and more atherosclerotic disease will continue to be scrambled by the ENC/AEB. However, the preponderance of research shows dietary cholesterol alters blood lipids in ways that damage arteries.

By James Kenney, PhD, FACN

FOOD NEWS YOU CAN USE

Strict School Snack Laws Linked to Healthy Weight

A study published in *Pediatrics* indicates that strict laws regulating the presence of healthful foods in schools may be connected to healthier weight in children. The study explored the effect of strict laws that regulate so-called “competitive” foods sold outside of the regular meal program -- foods and drinks in vending machines, school snack bars, etc.

Researchers tracked the weight of 6,300 students from 5th to 8th grade, monitoring any changes that occurred. Once the data was collected, the team compared the results in terms of the laws in each child’s home state. They ranked the competitive food laws as either strict, weak, or nonexistent. Strict laws addressed specif-

ics about what was and was not healthful, while weak laws were quite general and often called for nonspecific measures to be taken.

The children in states with strict laws governing the sale of competitive foods gained less weight in that three-year period than children in states with weak to no competitive food laws. Furthermore, the study found that kids who were obese at the start of the study were more likely to reach a healthy weight by the end of the study -- if they lived in states with strict laws about what can and cannot be sold outside of the school meal program.

According to Daniel Taber, one of the authors of the study, “Competitive-food laws can have an effect on obesity rates if the laws are specific, required and consistent.”



Halloween Treats!

Make a colorful and festive witch hat with our delicious slaw recipe. It’s perfect for any Halloween celebration, so [download the recipe](#) today!

For more healthful and creative holiday recipes, visit our [database](#).

Fall

Looking for some seasonal produce ideas and tips? Look no further!

- Apples – These tasty fruits are packed with nutrients and make a perfect snack when you’re on the go. However, if you have a few minutes, they are also delicious when sliced and sauteed with a little nutmeg and cinnamon.
- Pumpkin – Once you’ve carved up your very own jack-o-lantern, save and roast the pumpkin seeds for a festive fall snack.
- Sweet Potatoes – For a quick side dish, simply prick the outside of a sweet potato with a fork, wrap it in plastic wrap, and microwave on high until potato is tender and cooked through. Top with sprinkle of cinnamon or fresh herbs.



Chewy Chocolate Gingerbread Cookies

Ingredients

8 tablespoons trans-free stick margarine
1 tablespoon grated ginger root
1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup unsulfured molasses
1 & 1/2 cups plus 1 tablespoon flour
1 & 1/4 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
7 ounces semisweet chocolate chips

Directions

1. In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat margarine, ginger, and sugars until whitened, about 4 minutes.

2. Add molasses and dry ingredients; scrape bowl and mix well.

3. Mix in chocolate; turn out onto a piece of plastic wrap. Pat dough out to about 1 inch thick; seal with wrap; refrigerate or freeze until firm, 2 hours or more.

4. Heat oven to 325F.

5. Roll dough into 1 1/2 inch balls, place the pieces on a baking sheet, and refrigerate for 20 minutes.

6. Roll each piece in granulated sugar and place back on the baking sheet.

7. Bake until the surfaces crack slightly, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.



Nutrition Facts

This recipe makes 24 cookies. Each single-cookie serving contains 105 calories, 2 grams of fat, 1 gram of saturated fat, 0 grams of trans fat, 0 milligrams of cholesterol, 59 milligrams of sodium, 21 grams of carbohydrates, 1 gram of fiber, 12 grams of sugar, and 1 gram of protein.



Want to learn more?

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Our blog is also full of MyPlate tips and updates: www.foodandhealth.com.

What are you waiting for? Visit today!

MEET SUPERTRACKER!

MyPlate Update

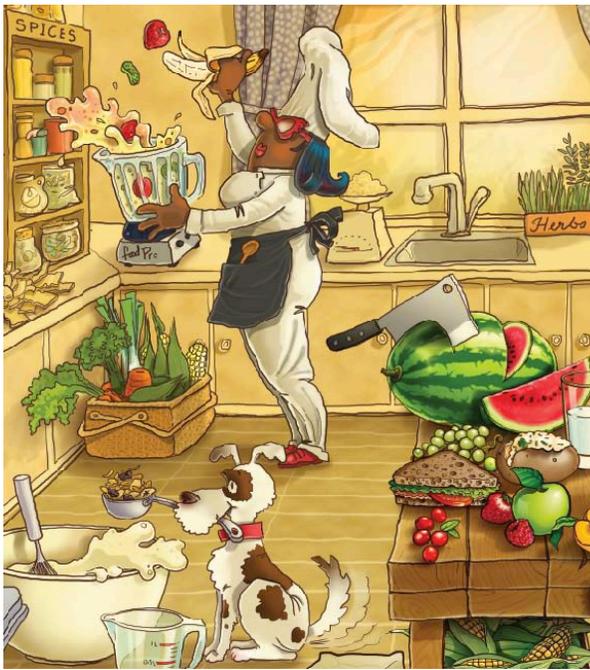
SuperTracker is a fantastic tool from MyPlate. It helps people create and track personalized activity and nutrition plans. Now that it has over 1 million registered users, it is celebrating with a few new features. The one that caught our eye is the ability to add a personal calorie goal that can be aligned with recommendations from dietitians.



To get started, visit the [SuperTracker homepage](#) or check out this list of [10 Tips for Starting SuperTracker](#).

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Top Tools for a Healthful Kitchen



Putting together a healthful kitchen and not sure where to start? Check out our top ten list of key cooking equipment!

- 1. Sharp Knife** - If you follow MyPlate's advice (and you should!), half your plate should be filled with fruits and veggies at each meal. In order to make prepping these foods a breeze, it makes sense to have a good, dependable knife. Choose a knife that fits well in your hand and that is firmly in your price range. Keep a large knife for chopping and a small knife for more detailed slicing.
- 2. Secure, Easy-to-Clean Cutting Board** - We love plastic cutting boards with rubber edges. They prevent slipping and are dishwasher-safe for easy sanitizing. Keep a few cutting boards handy -- that way, you can always use a separate cutting board for raw meat. Keeping cutting boards and tools separate is a key part of avoiding cross-contamination.
- 3. Bread Machine** - These machines aren't just for bread anymore -- you can use them to create bread, pizza, bread sticks, calzones, etc. Plus, if you're making your own versions of these foods, you can incorporate whole grain flours and reduce sodium content for a more healthful final product.
- 4. Nonstick Skillet** - This makes whipping up stir fries, pasta, and sauteed veggies a snap! Plus, the nonstick coating means that you'll need to use less fat in order to keep ingredients from clinging to the pan.
- 5. Dutch Oven** - A Dutch oven is very versatile. It's especially great for soup, chili, pasta, and many other plant-based dishes.
- 6. Lettuce Spinner** - A lettuce spinner delivers crisp, clean, dry leaves in minutes, and is great for storing salads too. It will even pay for itself -- whole lettuce is way cheaper than pre-washed greens.
- 7. Rice Cooker** - We couldn't live without it! This appliance cooks grains perfectly. Try it with rice, quinoa, steel cut oats, barley, etc.
- 8. Crock-Pot** - This is especially great for beans -- our long-cooking, high-fiber friends can soak and cook in this pot until they are totally perfect. Plus, you can use a Crock-Pot for soups, chilis, chicken, and much more.
- 9. Microwave** - We love microwaves so much that we have two! They are super at defrosting and reheating, which makes safe food preparation quick and easy. Plus, healthy "planned-overs" are the mainstay of any kitchen!
- 10. Pannini Press** - We use this more than the stove! It's perfect for vegetarian sandwiches and it also makes bean quesadillas a snap!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

The Whole Egg Story

The Real Deal:

When you look at the nutrition information for a single egg, you may think it looks like a healthful option. After all, one egg contains roughly 74 calories, 5 g fat, 0 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein, 67 mg potassium, 212 mg cholesterol, and 70 mg sodium. Except for the cholesterol, that is a pretty healthful choice. However, most egg-based dishes are loaded with fat, sodium, and cholesterol. Take a look at the McDonald's Sausage, Egg, and Cheese McGriddle, for instance. This seemingly innocuous egg sandwich packs 560 calories, 32 grams of fat, and 1360 milligrams of sodium. That dish is simply loaded with fat and calories, and much of the egg's nutritional benefits are overrun by a tide of fat and salt. Meals like these are far too common, and tend to give eggs a bad rap.

Healthful Options:

There are still tons of healthful ways to eat eggs -- if you know where to look. For example, if you scramble 2 egg whites, you can get all the protein from the eggs without the fat or cholesterol. You can also create a **MyPlate Breakfast** by scrambling an egg white and placing it on a slice of 100% whole wheat toast. Top the eggs with 1 cup of steamed spinach, and have a glass of skim milk and a banana on the side. Another healthful option is a lighter version of a typical egg sandwich. To make a **Light Egg Sandwich**, simply microwave 1/4 cup of nonfat egg substitute until eggs are firm and fluffy, around 2-3 minutes. Place the eggs on a slice of 100% whole wheat toast, then top with one tablespoon of low-sodium ketchup and a slice of tomato.

Danger Zones: Egg Edition

	Calories	Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Sodium (mg)
2 Fried Eggs	184	14	12	94
Denny's All-American Slam	800	68	40	1410
Denny's Western Omelette	700	46	38	2180
McDonald's Big Breakfast	740	48	28	1460
McDonald's Sausage, Egg, and Cheese McGriddle	560	32	20	1360

Healthful Alternatives

	Calories	Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Sodium (mg)
2 Scrambled Egg Whites	34	0	7	110
MyPlate Breakfast	350	4	19	391
Light Egg Sandwich	123	1	10	269

Sources: <http://www.fatsecret.com/calories-nutrition/usda/>, www.dennys.com, www.mcdonalds.com

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

PRESENTATION IDEAS YOU CAN USE

Here is an interesting link from Lauren Swann, MS, RD, LDN, which we've turned into a helpful new resource for you!

Size with Your Eyes:

It seems like the portion size explosion may be beginning to change course, at least according to evidence provided by [Restaurant Management magazine](#). In one of its latest articles, "[A Big Year for Small Portions](#)," the magazine outlines a few ways that various restaurants are reducing portion size and changing the balance of their plates.

Have participants evaluate this information themselves by crafting a colorful display that compares traditional entrees to lighter fare. Look at pictures of two Applebee's entrees, for example. How is the Cabernet Mushroom Sirloin (from the Weight Watchers section of the menu) different from the Shrimp 'N Parmesan Sirloin (from the traditional section of the menu)? By providing opportunities to evaluate actual visual representations of the food and

its arrangement on the plate, participants will have more tools to effectively weigh their options when looking at restaurant menus.

There are a few different ways to display this information. Most large restaurant chains have photos of menu items on their websites, so a little research and printing could take care of the whole shebang. You could also draw the proportions of each item and arrange pictures that way. Of course, you could go to the restaurants, order the foods, and take pictures of the actual plates, but that seems a bit expensive and labor-intensive.

Once you have the images you have decided to use, it's time to pick a presentation style. A side-by-side comparison of heavy food alongside a smaller option can really bring the point home, but another display that features one side filled with traditional entrees and another featuring smaller portions could also be effective. Try them and let us know what works for you!



Now that things are finally cooling down, October is a great time to ramp up outdoor activities. Not sure where to start? Check out www.active.com for a list of fun activities

near you. It features searches for endurance events like triathlon, running, and cycling, as well as lists of nearby team sports, camps, and golf and tennis games. Check it out today!

October

CALENDAR ONLINE:

These are featured in "Member Library-Click Here" in the Health Calendar Tab.

HEALTH OBSERVANCES:

[Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
[Celiac Awareness Month](#)
[Cranberry Month](#)
[Dessert Month](#)
[Health Literacy Month](#)
[Healthy Lung Month](#)
[Liver Awareness Month](#)
[Lupus Awareness Month](#)
[Pasta Month](#)
[Pizza Month](#)
[Popcorn Month](#)
[Pork Month](#)
[Seafood Month](#)
[Vegetarian Awareness Month](#)
[Bone and Joint Awareness Week](#) (Oct 14-20)
[Health Education Week](#) (Oct. 21-27)

Handouts:

- [7 Steps for Lung Cancer Prevention](#)
- [Better Birthday Treats](#)
- [Do It Yourself Health Plan](#)
- [Got Healthy Bones?](#)
- [Popcorn](#)
- [Wellness Assessment Form](#)

[October Newsletters](#)
[2012 Newsletters](#)
[Photo Library](#)

Presentation Ideas:

- [Better Breakfasts](#)
- [Healthful One Dish Dinners](#)

Find hundreds of handouts in our online library at communicatingfoodforhealth.com.

Looking for a specific item and having trouble finding it? Just email or call us -- we're happy to help, anytime!

Can Chocolate Prevent Strokes?

Research that suggests chocolate and cocoa powder may lower blood pressure (BP) has been accumulating for many years. This research began with observations of the Kuna Indians of Panama, who see little or no rise in BP with age. The Kuna living on their island homes drink 5 or more cups of a cocoa drink. The Kuna who live in Panama City, on the other hand, do not, and they see their BP rise with age, just like others in Panama. Cocoa beans, like many other plant foods, contain phytochemicals that appear to improve the functioning of the endothelial cells that line the lumen of arteries. These and similar phytochemicals called flavanols are also found in tea, the skin of grapes, and numerous other plant foods. Chocolate flavanols have been shown to help dilate blood vessels, improve blood flow to the brain and heart, and help lower blood pressure. There is also limited evidence that chocolate flavanols may help reduce platelet adhesion and improve insulin sensitivity. Much of this research has been short-term and used specially processed cocoa powder processed in

ways that do not drastically reduce flavanol content.

The problem with flavanols is that they are bitter, so most cocoa is processed with alkali (called "dutching") to eliminate them. Dutching also darkens the cocoa powder so buying "dark" chocolate usually results in a low flavanol content chocolate. Also, many chocolate products are high in sugar and have added milk fat. Would the small amounts of chocolate flavanols in modern diets still reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease [Hollenberg NK. *Circulation* 2007;116:2360-2]?

New research from Sweden found that consuming chocolate was associated with a significant reduction in the risk of experiencing a stroke. Unlike many observational studies, this was a prospective study with a fairly long-term follow-up. Researchers from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm followed over 37,000 men for an average of ten years. At the study's onset, the men filled out a questionnaire regarding their health and also completed a food frequency questionnaire (FFQ). The

FFQ results were used to estimate each man's weekly chocolate consumption. This data on chocolate intake was then correlated with data from the Swedish Hospital Discharge Registry that looked at the incidence of stroke in these men over the ensuing 10 years. Men in the highest quartile of chocolate consumption had a 17 percent lower risk of stroke than the 25% consuming the least chocolate. However, this effect disappeared among men with a history of high blood pressure. Given that elevated BP is the #1 risk factor for stroke and chocolate flavanols help lower BP, this is perhaps not surprising.

Bottom Line: Most of the chocolate consumed in the USA is alkali processed and much of it has a lot of butterfat and refined sugar added to it. For now, the best bet for getting more healthful flavanols in the diet is eating more minimally processed plant foods. Cocoa not processed with alkali with a bitter taste is far better than a milk chocolate candy bar.

By James Kenney, PhD, FACN

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