

Two-egg diet cracks cholesterol issue

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Research published in The European Journal of Nutrition this week has finally cracked the myths surrounding eggs and cholesterol. The new study showed that people who ate two eggs per day, while on a calorie-restricted diet, not only lost weight but also reduced their blood cholesterol levels.

A research team from the University of Surrey headed by Dr Bruce Griffin fed two eggs per day to overweight but otherwise healthy volunteers for 12 weeks while they simultaneously followed a reduced calorie diet prescribed by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) – who normally restrict egg intake to 3-4 per week. A control group followed the same BHF diet but cut out eggs altogether.

Both groups lost between 3 to 4kg (7- 9lbs) in weight and saw a fall in the average level of blood cholesterol.

Research leader Dr Bruce Griffin stated: "When blood cholesterol was measured at both six weeks and twelve weeks, both groups showed either no change or a reduction, particularly in their LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, despite the egg group increasing their dietary cholesterol intake to around four times that of the control."

This research provides further evidence to support the now established scientific understanding that saturated fat in the diet (most often found in pastry, processed meats, biscuits and cakes) is more responsible for raising blood cholesterol than cholesterol-rich foods, such as eggs.

As a nation, we currently eat 28 million eggs a day; between two and three per person per week – one of the lowest intakes in the world. Neither the Food Standards Agency nor the British Dietetic Association places any recommendation on the number of eggs we should eat in a week but many health care professionals are still giving out-of-date advice to cut back on eggs.

Nutritionists are now calling for health care professionals to revise their recommendations to mirror the findings of the most recently published research.

Dr Griffin continued: "There is no convincing evidence to link an increased intake of dietary cholesterol or eggs with coronary heart disease through raised blood cholesterol. Indeed, eggs make a nutritional contribution to a healthy, calorie-restricted diet. We have shown that when two eggs a day are eaten by people who are actively losing weight on a calorie-restricted diet, blood cholesterol can still be reduced."

Provided by University of Surrey