

Choosing Eggs

A customer requested we discuss eggs as part of our National Nutrition Month topics, so here's some info about how to choose eggs and how to keep them fresh.

Conventional Eggs

As most of you know, most grocery store eggs come from factory farms. Hens are raised in very small cages and usually have their beaks cut off to keep them from pecking the others and themselves. They are exposed to high-intensity light for at least 23 hours a day and are fed hormones to start producing eggs at a very early age and to keep egg production high. Diseases in these environments are rampant so antibiotics are used to keep the birds alive. Overuse of antibiotics leads to mutated bacteria, which are resistant to antibiotics.

Free Range/Cage Free

Grocery store eggs labeled as free range are typically not from the outdoor environment we would expect. The only stipulation for free range eggs is that the hens must have access to the outdoors for at least five minutes per day. How likely is it that they were actually outside? There is also no stipulation on what type of feed they receive.

Organic

As with our organic foods, organic feed has had no chemical pesticides or fertilizers used in its production. Also, there are no animal by-products, synthetic nutrients, nor genetically modified grains.

Real Eggs

Real eggs come from chickens that have constant access to the outdoors, and use it! Chickens should be outside, scratching and eating grass and bugs. Ideally they should be in movable pens (if they aren't allowed to roam totally free) so there's always fresh grass and bugs. These are considered *pastured* eggs.

In these, more natural environments, chickens can live over twice as long as those in factory farms. They are not forced to start producing eggs at a very early age and are quite healthy and robust.

Eggs from these hens have been shown to have much higher content of omega-3s (up to 10 times that of conventional farms), vitamin D from sun exposure (3 to 6 times), vitamins A, E, and B-12, and folic acid.

Fresh Eggs

Your best bet for fresh eggs is to buy from small, local producers. These will most likely be your freshest eggs from happy, healthy chickens. Believe it or not, truly fresh eggs can be left at room temperature. They will stay good on your counter for a week. In the refrigerator, they will stay very fresh for one month and will be good for four to six months.

Chlorophyll

Although it's not very well known in the world of nutrition, chlorophyll couldn't be more important in the world of biology and plants. All green plants contain at least one type of chlorophyll (chlorophyll a). Plants that evolved at a later point in history ("higher plants") also contain a second type of chlorophyll (chlorophyll b). There are also forms of chlorophyll called chlorophyll c1, c2, and c3, as well as a chlorophyll d, but these forms are much less widely distributed in the plant world. Chlorophyll is the single most critical substance in plants that allows them to absorb light from the sun and convert that light into usable energy. (In biochemistry, it's called the primary photoreceptor pigment).

There are a number of benefits to taking chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is able to purify the body, relieve inflammation, and act as a rejuvenative tonic. It acts as a mild bowel detoxifier or laxative and is helpful for irritable bowel syndrome, cramping pains in intestines, and mild constipation. Chlorophyll also feeds a weakened bloodstream and helps to detoxify "dirty" blood. The liquid does not need to be digested so it's assimilated quickly into the bloodstream. These are just a few of the uses!

Overcooking is particularly important to avoid when it comes to chlorophyll, but with very short steaming times, the chlorophyll content of these foods is preserved, and absorption of chlorophyll from these foods may actually be increased. Consumption of these green vegetables in raw form is also an excellent way to obtain the health benefits of chlorophyll. Overcooking leafy greens can destroy up to 99% of the chlorophyll content.

Besides through vegetables, chlorophyll is available in both liquid form and gel caps. Read more about chlorophyll at <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=george&dbid=52> and <http://www.naturalnews.com/chlorophyll.html>