Fiction: Consumption of dietary cholesterol is a leading risk factor for heart disease.

**FACT:** Dietary cholesterol is not a primary contributor to heart disease; saturated fat is a leading dietary factor. Eggs do not appear to contribute to heart disease in most people. A wealth of studies over the last 30 years have demonstrated this, including a study from Harvard School of Public Health in 1990 which found that daily egg intake did not contribute to heart disease risk in nearly 120,000 men and women. More recently, in 2007, a study done at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey found no link between frequent egg consumption and heart disease.

Fiction: The latest research shows that eggs should be limited in the diet in order to prevent heart disease.

**FACT:** Many years of misunderstanding the effect of dietary cholesterol intake on blood cholesterol levels have led to past restrictions on egg intake. The American Heart Association no longer recommends a specific limit on egg consumption provided you limit your total dietary cholesterol intake to an average of 300 mg daily, which can include an egg every day.

Fiction: Egg yolks are high in fat and contribute little else to the diet.

**FACT:** Egg yolks contain 45% of the egg's protein, numerous minerals, and the majority of the egg's vitamins. And they provide all of this for 59 calories (a whole egg has 78 calories) and 4.4 grams of total fat, 1.5 grams of which are saturated fat. So, unless your doctor has prescribed a special egg-free diet for you, you can continue to enjoy nutrient-dense eggs.

Fiction: Grade AA eggs stand up tall. The yolk is firm and the area covered by the white is small. There is a large proportion of thick white to thin white.

**Grade AA eggs** stand up tall. The yolk is firm and the area covered by the white is small. There is a large proportion of thick white to thin white.

Fiction: Grade A eggs cover a relatively small area. The yolk is round and upstanding. The thick white is large in proportion to the thin white and stands fairly well around the yolk.

**Grade A eggs** cover a relatively small area. The yolk is round and upstanding. The thick white is large in proportion to the thin white and stands fairly well around the yolk.

Fiction: Grade B eggs spread out more. The yolk is flattened, and there is about as much (or more) thin white as thick white.

**Grade B eggs** spread out more. The yolk is flattened, and there is about as much (or more) thin white as thick white.

Fiction: Size is determined by the appearance of the egg.

**FACT:** Size is based on minimum net weight expressed in ounces per dozen.

Fiction: Any size egg may be used for frying, scrambling, cooking in the shell, and poaching, most recipes for baked dishes, such as custards and cakes, are based on the use of Large eggs. To substitute another size, use this chart:

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Fiction: Nutrient profiles of all eggs sold in the supermarket are the same.

**FACT:** Varying the diet of hens has produced a variety of nutrient-enhanced eggs. For example, some eggs on the market contain reduced levels of fat, lower cholesterol, and increased levels of vitamins and/or Omega-3 fatty acids. These specialty eggs are found under various brand names, and, due to increased production costs, are usually sold at a higher retail price.

Fiction: Additive hormones are used to increase egg production.

**FACT:** Additive hormones are not fed to poultry in the United States.

Fiction: An egg that floats in a glass of salt-water is not fresh.

**FACT:** This test has no relationship to the freshness of table eggs. While eggs do take in air as they age, the size of the air cell varies from egg to egg when they are laid. Consequently, a freshly-laid egg and an older egg might react very similarly.

Fiction: Egg freshness is difficult to determine.

**FACT:** The best way to judge freshness is to check the 3-number code on the small side of the carton. It's the Julian date with 001 representing January 1 and 365 standing for December 31. This is the day the eggs were packed, and they'll keep in your refrigerator at least 4 to 5 weeks after this date without significant quality loss. If you can't find a Julian date, plan to use eggs within about 3 weeks or so of purchase to allow for the possibility that the retailer may have temporarily stored them before you purchased them. However, properly handled and stored, eggs rarely "spoil."

Fiction: Eggs do not need to be refrigerated.

**FACT:** An egg left at room temperature for one day will age as much as it would in a week in the refrigerator. Not only that, but proper refrigeration prevents the growth of organisms that cause food-borne illness.

GRADE refers to the interior and exterior quality of the egg at the time of packing. Egg packers who do not use the USDA grade shield follow state standards. The USDA grade shield on an egg carton means that the eggs have been graded, packaged, and monitored for sanitation under the supervision of USDA. The USDA grading service is voluntary, and egg packers who use the service pay for it.
**Fiction:** Eggs should be stored in the slots on the refrigerator door.

**FACT:** The best place to keep eggs is in the original carton on an inside shelf. Not only does the temperature on the door fluctuate when the door is opened, but slamming the door can cause breakage. Furthermore, the carton actually helps prevent eggs from picking up odors from other foods and helps prevent the loss of carbon dioxide and water from the eggs.

**Fiction:** All high-quality protein is expensive.

**FACT:** If a food supplies high-quality protein, that food contains all nine essential amino acids that the body needs to support growth. It is therefore considered a “complete” protein. Complete proteins are found in meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, and soy products. High-quality protein foods don’t have to be expensive. In fact, eggs are often the least expensive high-quality protein food. Based on data from the USDA Economic Research Service, the cost of a single serving of eggs is the lowest when compared with milk, chicken, ground beef, pork chop or beef round roast (www.ers.usda.gov/Data/MeatPriceSpreads).

**Fiction:** An egg with a blood spot is "bad."

**FACT:** Not at all. These eggs are still entirely fit to eat, and the blood spot can be removed with the tip of a knife (if desired). Blood spots are caused by the rupture of a blood vessel on the yolk surface during formation of the egg, or by a similar accident in the wall of the hen’s ovum duct. Less than 1% of all eggs produced have blood spots, and most of these are detected by electronic spotters before they ever reach the market.

**Fiction:** Thick, rope-like strands of egg whites should be removed.

**FACT:** These natural, entirely edible parts of the egg called chalazae anchor the yolk in the center of the thick white. They are neither imperfections nor beginning embryos. They do not interfere with the cooking or beating of the white and need not be removed. In fact, the more prominent they are, the fresher the egg.

**Fiction:** If a hard-cooked egg is hard to peel, it must be old.

**FACT:** On the contrary, the fresher the egg, the more tightly the shell membrane clings to the shell. As an egg ages, it loses carbon dioxide and water and takes in air, causing the shell membranes to shrink away from the shell. If you hard-cook eggs that are at least 1 week old, they’ll be easier to peel after cooking.

**Fiction:** Brown-shelled eggs are more nutritious than white.

**FACT:** Shell color is determined by the breed of the hen and does not affect quality, nutrients, flavor, or cooking characteristics. However, since brown-egg layers are slightly larger birds and require more food, their eggs are usually more expensive than white.

**Fiction:** Eggs are often infected with the *Salmonella* bacteria.

**FACT:** On average across the U.S., only one out of every 20,000 commercially-produced eggs might contain the Salmonella bacteria. This means an average consumer will encounter an infected egg once every 84 years. Purchasing eggs from a refrigerated dairy case and properly refrigerating at home reduce the risk of foodborne illness. In addition, thoroughly cook eggs so that whites and yolks are firm, and cook dishes containing eggs to an internal temperature of 160°F.