

Egg-irony: High cholesterol food may reduce blood pressure

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Researchers in Canada are reporting evidence that eggs - often frowned upon for their high cholesterol content - may reduce another heart disease risk factor - high blood pressure.

They describe identification of egg proteins that act like a popular group of prescription medications in lowering blood pressure. The report appeared in the Feb. 11 issue of ACS' *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, a bi-weekly publication.

In the new study, Jianping Wu and Kaustav Majumder note that eggs are an inexpensive source of high-quality protein and other nutrients. Egg consumption, however, has decreased during the last 40 years amid concerns about cholesterol. Recent studies do suggest that healthy people can eat eggs without increasing their heart disease risk. Other research hinted that certain egg proteins might have effects similar to ACE inhibitors, prescription drugs used to treat high blood pressure.

Pursuing that lead in laboratory studies, the scientists identified several different peptides in boiled and fried eggs that act as potent ACE inhibitors. The scientists showed that enzymes in the stomach and small intestine produce these peptides from eggs. Fried eggs had the highest ACE inhibitory activity. It will take studies in humans to determine if the egg proteins do lower blood pressure in people, the scientists emphasized. Funding for the research came from livestock and poultry industry groups. -MTS

ARTICLE: "Angiotensin I Converting Enzyme Inhibitory Peptides from Simulated in Vitro Gastrointestinal Digestion of Cooked Eggs"

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