

CHICKEN

Many people, fearful of the high levels of fat and cholesterol in beef and other "red" meats, are eating more chicken, believing that poultry is a healthy alternative. They could not be more wrong. Not only does chicken contain the same similar amounts of cholesterol as beef, it is also likely to be contaminated with leukosis (chicken cancer), which infects 90 percent of factory-farmed chickens, or salmonellosis, which has also been found in as much as 90 percent of federally inspected poultry. In addition, antibiotic resistant bacteria flourish in barns due to the poor living conditions of the chickens.

The poultry industry may not want you to know it, but chicken is no health food. Chicken breeders and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have energetically promoted the birds as a healthy alternative to beef, and from 1950 to the present; consumption of "broilers" has steadily increased. Broilers are chickens raised for meat.

Chicken and Cholesterol

Let's take a look at what chicken is actually made of. Comparing chicken and beef, four ounces of beef (about the size of a deck of cards) and four ounces of chicken both contain about 100 milligrams of cholesterol, and the cholesterol from chicken does just as good of a job at clogging arteries and causing heart attacks, strokes and encourages the growth of atherosclerotic plaque. In other words, beef and chicken are virtually identical. Optimal cholesterol intake is zero. All the cholesterol our bodies need to function is produced in our liver, and any that you eat is excessive and deleterious.

Chicken is a problem for several other reasons, too. There is no fiber in any meat, and chicken is no exception. So chicken contributes to all the illnesses linked to low-fiber diets. There is also no Vitamin C and no complex carbohydrates.

The Unhealthy Result

According to the Food and Drug Administration, poultry is the number one source of food-borne illnesses, causing an estimated 1,680 deaths per year and millions of cases of "stomach upset" or "food poisoning." An inspector has only less than a second per bird to check for signs of contamination.

The Protein Problem

Because of their addiction to poultry, fish, and beef, Americans average 100 gm of dietary protein per day, while most studies show that greater than 95 gm of daily protein results in substantial calcium loss. A hunk of stewed chicken's breast is a whopping 75 percent protein. Far from being an advantage, large amounts of protein contribute to osteoporosis and kidney deterioration.

Chickens Used for Flesh

Chickens raised and killed for their flesh are bred and drugged to grow so large so fast that many are crippled under their own weight and are unable to reach food or water. Many chickens die of heart attacks, suffocation, starvation, or stress-related illnesses. Survivors are forced to live among the corpses of other chickens in dark, crowded, excrement-filled sheds. The ammonia in the air burns their eyes and lungs and many suffer from pneumonia and cancer. At slaughter, chickens' throats are cut and they are dunked into tanks of scalding hot water, often while they are still conscious.

There's No Room for Chicken in a Healthy Diet

Q: Why has chicken become so popular?

A: Unbeknownst to them, chickens have played center stage in a grand marketing campaign by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and chicken farmers aimed to promote chicken as some sort of "health food." With 9 billion chickens eaten each year in the U.S., it appears many people have been swayed. However, an honest look at the nutritional value of chicken reveals quite a different picture.

Q: Is chicken really low in fat?

A: Not even close. A 3.5-ounce piece of broiled lean flank steak is 56 percent fat as a percentage of calories. Chicken contains nearly the same at 51 percent. Even when the skin is removed, dark meat is thrown away, and a non-fat cooking method is used, chicken is still 23 percent fat. Compare that with the fat in a baked potato (1 percent), steamed cauliflower (6 percent), and baked beans (4 percent), and any ideas that chicken is a health food melt away. Fancy packages can't disguise the fact that chicken and all meats are muscles, and muscles are made of protein and fat.

Q: Do I need the protein in chicken?

A: We all need some protein, and there is more than enough in grains, beans, and vegetables. The amount of protein consumed by Americans who eat meat has elevated their risks for serious health problems. Also, the combination of fat, protein, and carcinogens found in cooked chicken creates troubling risks for colon cancer. A healthy vegan diet contains just the right balance of protein-not too much and not too little.

Q: What's NOT in chicken?

A: Chicken, no matter how smartly advertised, will never contain fiber, complex carbohydrates, or vitamin C. Fiber is the heavy-duty cleanser of the digestive tract, carrying away excess hormones filtered from the blood, while it lowers cholesterol-naturally. Complex carbohydrates, found only in plants, are low in calories and boost metabolism, aiding in weight loss.

Vitamin C and other antioxidants are vital cancer fighters. When chicken meat takes the place of vegetables, grains, and fruits on your plate, your supply of vitamins dwindles. Chicken not only gives you a load of fat you don't want, it displaces metabolism- and immune-boosting foods that are essential to good health and weight control.

Q: Where do heterocyclic amines come in?

A: Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) are potent carcinogens produced from creatine, amino acids, and sugars in poultry and other meats during cooking. These same chemicals are found in tobacco smoke and are 15 times more concentrated in grilled chicken than beef. HCAs may be one of the reasons meat-eaters have much higher colon cancer rates-about 300 percent higher compared to vegetarians.

Q: Is chicken...poisonous?!

A: With live salmonella bacteria growing inside one in every three packages of chicken, it is making a lot of people sick. Although deaths from salmonella poisonings sometimes make the evening news, millions more cases that cause flu-like symptoms go unaccounted. Salmonella poisoning can cause vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and low-grade fever lasting for several days. When it spreads to the blood and other organs, it can be fatal-and is, for as many as 9,000 people every year. The new kid on the chopping block-campylobacter-infects as many as two-thirds of all prepackaged chicken. Salmonella and campylobacter have become increasingly common because modern factory farms crowd thousands of chickens in tightly confined spaces, where excrement and other forms of bacteria spread contaminants.

Q: Does chicken have the same amount of cholesterol as beef?

A: Yes, nearly. Four ounces of beef-just the size of a deck of cards-and four ounces of chicken both contain about 100 milligrams of cholesterol, and the cholesterol from chicken does just as good of a job at clogging arteries and causing heart disease. The human body produces cholesterol on its own and never needs outside sources. Each added dose contributes to artery blockages, leading to heart attacks, strokes, and other serious problems.

NOTE: Spaghetti, tomatoes, baked beans, bananas, broccoli, and all other plant foods are free of cholesterol and will never contribute to coronary disease and related illnesses.