

# THE EGG:

## It's not what it's cracked up to be

Many people choose not to use eggs in their diet. About 70 percent of the calories in eggs are from fat, and a large portion of that fat is saturated. Eggs are also loaded with cholesterol-about 213 milligrams for an average-sized egg. Because eggshells are fragile and porous, and conditions on egg farms are crowded and unsanitary, eggs are the perfect host to salmonella-the bacteria that is the leading cause of food poisoning in the United States.

### Eggs and Colorectal Cancer Mortality

In the largest study of its kind ever, researchers compared egg consumption across 34 countries over a three decade time span to colon and rectal cancer death rates. They found egg consumption on a population level was significantly associated with mortality in men and women in countries across the world. Yes, but perhaps that's because egg eaters were also more likely to eat meat, or to smoke, or less likely to eat vegetables. Even after controlling for almost all established and potential risk factors for these two cancers, the relationship remained. On a population level, the more eggs that were eaten, the more deaths there was from rectal and colon cancer.

We not only improve our own health when we kick the egg habit; we also spare many, many hens from unspeakable suffering. Over 95% of the layer hens in this country are packed in cages with floor-space the size of a record cover, 5 hens to a cage. The intense confinement for these debeaked birds is so bad that they can't even stretch one wing for the entirety of the twelve months that they are kept this way before being sent to slaughter. Since each factory-farmed hen produces an average of 250 eggs over her year of laying, each egg represents 35 hours of a miserable existence.

### What About Eating Eggs if I Raise My Own Chickens?

The concern is that many well-meaning folks get chickens and they think that means guilt-free omelettes for life. WRONG! Animal husbandry is nothing to take lightly. Taking care of chickens is costly, takes up lots of space, and, frankly, is a huge undertaking. Plus, what happens when your chicken stops laying eggs when she's one year old and still has another 13 years left? Are you willing and able to give that chicken a fulfilling life, keep her safe from predators, and provide enrichment, food, and medication?

It's much more economical, healthier and easier to avoid eggs and enjoy delicious vegan tofu scrambles and keep a box of Ener-g Egg Replacer powder in the pantry.

### What Happens to Hens When They are No Longer Capable of Laying Eggs?

It is not economical for factory farmed hens to be kept alive when they can no longer generate eggs. At slaughter, hens' throats are cut and they are dropped into tanks of scalding water, often while they are still conscious. Because their little bodies are so badly bruised due to poor living conditions, when egg laying hens are killed at the end of their production cycle (typically 1-2 years) they are used in such processed foods as canned soup, pot pies and frozen dinner entrees where their flesh can be cut up and easily camouflaged. Something to remember the next time you stroll down the frozen food or canned food aisles in your local grocery store.

### Factory Farming of Egg Laying Chickens

The Percentage of U.S. farmed birds raised in intensive confinement: over 95%.

The wingspan of an average egg laying chicken is 26 inches yet the average space given each chicken in an egg factory cage is 6 inches by 6 inches. They cannot turn around or spread their wings. They cannot dust bathe themselves, roost, care for their young or do any other natural behavior that is innate to them.

Chickens are territorial animals who don't deal well with closely packed conditions of the factory farm. To keep the animals from pecking each other to death, the birds are 'debeaked', a painful procedure which involves cutting through bone, cartilage, and soft tissue with a hot cauterizing blade. Again, it is not economical to administer anything that might dull her pain during and after this procedure. Factory farm egg laying hens seldom see the light of day and their feet never touch the earth. Their little bottoms look like they've been turned inside out, very red and raw from the continual forced laying of eggs. The Poultry Tribune writes "We have discovered chickens literally grown fast to their cages...the flesh of their toes grew completely around the wire."

According to the USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Survey (NASS), 429,700,000 layer hens are killed for food per year. During a course of a 75-year long lifetime, each meateating person is responsible for the slaughter of 2,630 chickens.

### No Room for Roosters

For every suffering laying hen, there is also a male chick who was killed almost immediately after hatching. Hatcheries have no use for male chicks, and like garbage, they are usually disposed of as inexpensively as possible. (1) Male offspring are often thrown into huge trashcans, where they suffocate or are crushed under the weight of other birds; or (2) they are thrown into macerators - essentially high-powered meat grinders - while they are still alive. If the equipment is overloaded or not used properly, this method can horribly maim chicks and leave them to die slowly.

## WHAT TO USE INSTEAD OF EGGS

### Ener-G Egg Replacer:

This is a commercial product found in all Natural Food Stores

Mix 1/2 tsp of the powder mixed with 2 Tbsp. water. Equals 1 egg.

### Flax Seed Slurry Egg Substitute:

1 Tablespoon ground flaxseed mixed with 3 Tbsp. of water equals one egg.

Let stand for 5 minutes to thicken. Use in cookies, cakes, muffins or similar baking needs.

### Tofu Scramble

There are many versions of Tofu Scramble. Search the internet or vegan cookbooks to find your own favorite recipe. Some of the best

### Bananas

Recipes that require 2 or more bananas probably do not need eggs as bananas are a natural binding ingredient.

### The Vegg

A powder that you mix with water to make French toast, frittatas, "egg nog", custards, cakes and even Hollandaise sauce. Go to [www.thevegg.com](http://www.thevegg.com) for a list of recipes. Order on-line through [www.veganessentials.com](http://www.veganessentials.com).

### Aquafaba

The chickpea brine, or aquafaba, makes a great egg substitute in baking or when making meringue. 3 Tbsp aquafaba equal one egg.