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EGG NUTRITION NEWS BUREAU

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The Incredible Edible Remedy
Nutrients Found in Eggs Can Help Boost Immunity

Move over, vitamin C. There are other immune-boosting nutrients in town. In total, Americans suffer from an estimated 1 billion colds each year, and children miss 22 million school days because of it.¹ While there is no cure for the common cold, getting a wider variety of immune-boosting nutrients may be one simple way to reduce the risk. Add these nutrients – including several found in eggs – to your diet to enhance immunity and promote good health during cold and flu season:

- **Selenium:** Selenium works with vitamin E to function as an antioxidant. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are currently looking into the role that selenium plays in decreasing vulnerability to the influenza virus.² Eggs are a rich source of selenium: two eggs provide more than half (56 percent) of the recommended daily intake. Other foods with selenium include meat, seafood, whole grains and walnuts.
- **Vitamin A:** Vitamin A is necessary for maintaining the body's immune functions and decreasing susceptibility to infections. Vitamin A is found in foods including spinach, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe and mango. It is also found in egg yolks: one egg has 244 International Units (IU) of vitamin A, or 5 percent of the recommended daily intake.
- **High-Quality Protein:** Protein is not normally associated with immunity, but it plays a key role in building the antibodies needed to fight infection, as well as building and repairing body tissues. Eggs provide some of the highest quality proteins of any food. One egg has six grams of protein, or 13 percent of the recommended daily intake.
- **Vitamin B12:** Vitamin B12 works with folate to build red blood cells, helping the body stay healthy. Foods that have vitamin B12 include milk, cheese, fish and eggs. Eggs provide 11 percent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin B12.
- **Zinc:** Decades of research have shown that zinc plays an important role in reducing both the duration and severity of common cold symptoms. Eggs have 0.6 mg of zinc, which is 4 percent of the daily recommended intake. Zinc is also found in oysters, turkey, plain yogurt and sirloin steak.

Bridget Swinney, a registered dietitian and author of three books including *Healthy Food for Healthy Kids: The Practical and Tasty Guide to Child Nutrition*, agrees that eating nutrient-rich foods is important during the winter months. "I encourage parents to feed their family foods with nutrients that offer extra protection during the cold and flu season. Those foods will help children stay healthy and fight off germs," says Swinney.

Swinney provides these additional tips for fighting off the cold and flu:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or an antibacterial gel. To encourage kids to wash long enough to kill germs, teach them to soap up until they finish singing the ABCs or the Happy Birthday song.
- When eating eggs, don't skip the yolk! The yolk contains nearly half of the high-quality protein, as well as the majority of the other immune-boosting vitamins and minerals.
- Make sure to sneeze or cough into a tissue or onto clothing, instead of hands, to help stop the spread of germs – and wash hands afterwards. Teach kids to "cover their cough."
- For dinner, or any meal of the day, try a comforting nutrient-rich egg dish like [Hash Brown Quiche](#). Serve with orange juice or a kiwi, which are excellent sources of vitamin C, for an extra boost.

Looking for More Info?

- Join the discussion on eggs and nutrition science by subscribing to Dr. Donald J. McNamara's new blog "Unscrambling the Science" at www.unscramblingthescience.com.
- For more information and recipes, visit www.incredibleegg.org and www.enc-online.org.

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About the American Egg Board The American Egg Board (AEB) works on behalf of U.S. egg producers to build demand for The incredible edible egg.™ AEB is funded from a national legislative checkoff on all egg production (from companies with greater than 75,000 layers) within the continental United States. Appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the board of directors consists of 18 members and 18 alternates. AEB is located in Park Ridge, Ill. Visit www.aeb.org or www.incredibleegg.org for more information.

About the Egg Nutrition Center

The Egg Nutrition Center (ENC) is the health education and research center of the American Egg Board. Established in 1979, ENC provides science-based information to health promotion agencies, physicians, dietitians, nutritional scientists, media and consumers on issues related to egg nutrition and the role of eggs in the American diet. ENC is located in Washington, DC. Visit www.enc-online.org for more information.



ⁱ National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Common Cold." 7 December 2007, <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/colds/overview.htm>

ⁱⁱ Zeisel SH. "Choline: needed for normal development of memory." J Am Coll Nutr. 2000; Oct; 19(5 Suppl): 528S-531S.