

Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

May is *National Egg Month*, a time to focus on the many ways eggs enrich our lives. Eggs are a source of complete protein and are “nutrient-dense,” containing only 75 calories while providing over 20 nutrients. Choline in eggs has been shown to be an essential nutrient that may play a role in memory function throughout life. Two carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin, are both abundant in egg yolks. These carotenoids help prevent the increasingly common eye disorder of age-related macular degeneration that can lead to blindness.

Eggs have frequently been described as nature’s most perfect food. Then, for a period of years, they were considered a food to avoid because of their cholesterol content. However, they’re now making a comeback with research showing an egg a day will NOT increase the risk of heart disease or stroke for healthy individuals.

During this year’s *National Egg Month* celebration, the Poultry and Egg Division of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture invites you to enjoy eggs in your daily diet and take advantage of their many nutritional bonuses. Why not try this quick and easy recipe utilizing the incredible, edible egg?

V“egg”ie Stuffed Potatoes

1 tablespoon butter
 1 package (8 oz.) sliced mushrooms
 1½ cups thinly sliced carrots
 1 medium sweet red pepper, cut into ½-inch pieces (1 cup)
 ½ cup sliced green onions
 1 large clove garlic, minced
 ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
 6 eggs
 ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons skim milk
 Salt & pepper, optional
 6 large baking potatoes, cooked
 ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons shredded Cheddar cheese
 Additional sliced green onions, optional

In 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium heat, heat butter. Stir in vegetables, garlic and pepper flakes. Cook until crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. In medium bowl, beat together eggs, milk and salt and pepper, if desired. Push vegetables to one side of pan and pour in eggs. As eggs begin to set, gently draw an inverted pancake turner completely across bottom and sides of pan, mixing eggs with vegetables and forming large curds. Continue until eggs are thickened and no visible liquid egg remains. Make a cross slit on top of potato with a knife. Gently press lower part of potato to force potato up through the slit. Evenly divide eggs and cheese over the potatoes. Sprinkle with green onions, if desired.
Makes 6 servings.

Grill It Safely!

Alice Henneman
 Extension Educator,
 NU Lancaster County Extension
 &
 Joyce Jensen
 Environmental Health Specialist
 Lincoln-Lancaster County
 Health Department

Memorial Day traditionally kicks off the grilling season. Here are some checkpoints for safe grilling the next time you fire up the grill.

Shopping

✓ When shopping, choose meat and poultry last, and don’t put them in the trunk. The temperature there is too hot and bacteria will grow rapidly. Don’t let meat set out for longer than one hour during warm weather. If meat sets out too long, bacteria can produce toxins that can cause illness and stay active even during cooking.

✓ Refrigerate meat and poultry immediately upon arriving home.

✓ Purchase ground meat or poultry no more than a day or two before you plan to grill it. Otherwise, freeze them. Grill larger cuts of meat, such as steaks, within 4 days of purchase or freeze them.

Preparation

✓ Completely thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator or just prior to cooking in a microwave. Frozen foods do not grill evenly and may be unsafe. Never defrost on the counter—bacteria will begin to grow. It takes about 24 hours to thaw 5 pounds of meat in the refrigerator.

✓ Clean up juice spills immediately so a raw product does not get on a cooked product. Juice spills should be cleaned with a paper towel. If using a dishcloth to wipe up raw meat or poultry juices, wash it in hot soapy water before using it again.

✓ Marinate meat and poultry in the refrigerator. Sauce can be brushed on these foods while cooking, but never use the same sauce after cooking that has touched the raw product.

✓ Make ground beef patties about ½-inch thick by 4 inches in diameter (4 ounces or 4 patties per pound). This helps assure they cook thoroughly and evenly. The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) advises patties this size will take 11 to 13 minutes to cook to a safe temperature of 160°F based on beef that has been removed directly from the refrigerator; cooked over medium, ash-covered coals and grilled uncovered (www.beef.org). NCBA advises you to consult your owner’s manual for grilling guides for gas grills as brands vary greatly.

✓ Unwashed hands are a prime cause of food-borne illness. Whenever possible, wash your hands with hot, soapy water for 20 seconds before handling food. When eating away from home, pack disposable wipes for cleaning hands if no handwashing facilities are available.

Transporting

✓ Transport meat and poultry to a picnic site in a cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs. Pack food and cooler immediately before leaving home. Avoid frequently opening the cooler. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in another.

✓ Keep cooler in an air-conditioned vehicle for transporting and then keep in the shade or shelter at the picnic site. Remove at one time only the amount of food that will fit on the grill. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods, or foods meant to be eaten raw such as fruits and vegetables.

Grilling

✓ Cooking is key to meat and poultry safety. If needed, scrape the grill before grilling. Heat the grill to kill microorganisms before placing meat or poultry on it.

✓ Cook ground beef patties until brown in the middle and juices are clearish with no pink in them when you cut into the

meat (160°F). A hamburger can be brown in the middle and still be undercooked. The most accurate way to determine doneness is with an instant-read thermometer.

✓ While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends ground meats should be heated to 160°F to kill microorganisms, the temperature for a steak can be 145°F for “medium rare.” A “medium” steak is cooked to 160°F and a “well done” steak is cooked to 170°F. Use a tongs or spatula to turn steaks rather than a fork which punctures the meat and introduces bacteria into the interior of the meat.

✓ Whole poultry should be cooked to 180°F in the thigh. Breast meat should be cooked to 170°F. When poultry is done cooking, juices will run clear with no pink when you cut into the meat.

✓ If you’re preparing steaks, ground meat and/or poultry at the same time, use a different knife, utensil or thermometer to check for doneness. For example, don’t use the same thermometer to test steaks you used for hamburgers. Remember to wash thermometers in hot soapy water and hot rinse water before and after use.

✓ Adding sauces or spices to meat may make it look brown before it is done. Brush or sprinkle sauces/spices on the surface of cooked burgers.

✓ Cook meat and poultry completely at the picnic site. Partial cooking of foods ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking may not destroy them.

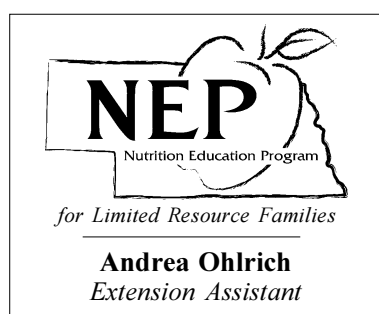
✓ Use a separate clean tongs or spatula for removing meat or poultry from the grill and place on a clean plate to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked meat.

✓ Discard any food left out for more than two hours or one hour if the temperature is above 90°F. When in doubt, throw it out!

Adolescents, Physical Activity and Nutrition

Does your son participate in soccer after school? Does your daughter dance at a local studio? Being physically active is important for people of all ages, including children and adolescents. As parents and role models, it is important to support them in this behavior. They will develop positive habits to last a lifetime.

The body’s need for energy increases when we’re physically active, making it important to maintain proper nutrition. Eating from the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid is essential, as well as maintaining proper hydration. Keep in mind variety, proportion and moderation when planning meals and snacks.



The following are frequently asked questions related to physical activity and nutrition for youth.

Q: How can I encourage my teenager to make healthy food choices?

A: Just like adults, teenagers need a wide variety of foods. It can be difficult getting them to

eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day when meals are consumed through fast food. Try offering new foods and various ethnic foods as teenagers like to experiment and try new things.

Q: What can my teenager have for a snack while traveling to games?

A: Snacks are a good way to refuel the body, especially two to three hours before vigorous physical activity and again within two hours after physical activity. Choose a snack that is mostly carbohydrate, a moderate amount of protein and a small amount of fat. Examples include: low-fat yogurt and milk, frozen yogurt, cheese, bananas, grilled chicken sandwiches, thick-crust

cheese or vegetable pizza, muffins and bagels.

Q: My child participates in long training sessions. Does he need to eat afterwards?

A: Yes. It is important for children and adolescents to eat healthy foods and beverages after physical activity, especially if the training sessions are particularly long. The body is most receptive to replacing nutrients during the first two hours after vigorous physical activity.

Q: Is it safe for my daughter to reduce her fat intake almost completely?

A: No. Fats provide essential fatty acids necessary for

growth. Children and adolescents should consume an average of 30 percent of their calories from fat.

Q: How much water should my child drink to stay hydrated?

A: To help replace the water our bodies lose each day, adolescents should drink at least 8 cups of water each day. Avoid relying on thirst as an indicator of hydration. If he or she is physically active, encourage drinking water before, during and after activity, especially if it takes place in warmer temperatures or there is excessive sweating.