



**For Immediate Release:
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Celebrate American Heart Month with Ohio Eggs
Egg Experts Provide Benefits for Eggs as Part of Heart-Healthy Diet

COLUMBUS, Ohio – February is American Heart Month and it's the perfect time for Ohioans to start, or keep, a smart habit that will benefit them for a lifetime – incorporating more eggs into their diet. The Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) is offering helpful information throughout the month on how Ohioans can make sure their heart health is strong and how eggs can help.

“Thousands of individuals and families made the resolution in 2017 to eat healthier and take better care of themselves – especially with their heart health – and are looking for ways to maintain their resolutions as the year continues,” said Jim Chakeres, executive vice president, OPA. “Eating healthier and treating your heart better begins with consuming a wholesome and nutritious breakfast that’s filled with protein-packed eggs every day.”

For decades, consumers have been given mixed messages about dietary cholesterol, especially as it relates to eggs. However, egg lovers can rejoice because research proves that healthy adults can enjoy eggs daily without affecting their risk of heart disease.

Eggs offer several beneficial nutrients to promote overall health. As an excellent source of selenium, eggs are one of the most affordable proteins available to Ohioans and include essential vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin B phosphorus and riboflavin, which actually helps prevent heart disease. Each large egg also contains only 70 calories, helping consumers feel fuller longer. Additionally, research shows that eggs eaten at the start of the day can reduce overall daily calorie intake, prevent snacking between meals, and keep an appetite satisfied on those busy days when mealtime is delayed.

“Eggs can make a positive impact as part of your well-rounded, healthy diet and can help you build muscle mass and maintain a healthy weight” said Chakeres. “American Heart Month is a great time to remember that eggs contain less cholesterol as previously thought and because they are extremely versatile, eggs can be eaten at any time of day - breakfast, lunch, dinner and for snacks.”

During American Heart Month, and every month, Ohioans have every reason to take advantage of the high-quality protein, broad nutritional benefits and versatility that eggs offer.

Ohio is the second-largest egg farming state in the nation and produces more than 9 billion eggs a year. For more information about Ohio’s egg, turkey and chicken farmers, nutrition benefits or for delicious recipes, visit www.OhioEggs.com and www.Pinterest.com/OhioPoultryAssn.

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See full recipe listed below for a heart-healthy breakfast:

Easy Breakfast Casserole

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound Turkey breakfast sausage
½ large onion, diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
6 - 7 slices wheat bread, crusts removed, cubed
2 cups cheese, divided (cheddar, gruyere, swiss, etc.)
8 Large Eggs
2 cups whole milk
1 teaspoon dry mustard
dash hot sauce
½ teaspoon pepper
pinch salt
fresh chives for garnish
buttered, 13 x 9-inch baking dish

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large skillet heat the oil over medium heat. Add the sausage, cook stirring frequently. After five minutes add the onion and red pepper. Continue cooking until sausage is browned and crumbly. Drain if needed.
3. Combine the sausage mixture with the bread, red pepper and cheese (reserve approximately 1/3 cup cheese for the top). Arrange the sausage/bread/cheese mixture evenly in a buttered, 13 x 9-inch baking dish.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, mustard, salt, pepper and hot sauce; carefully pour the mixture over the ingredients in the baking dish. Allow the dish to rest for one-hour. The casserole can be prepared, up to this point, a day in advance. It must be covered and refrigerated. Remove from the refrigerator and let stand 30-minutes prior to baking.
5. Bake casserole until set and golden, about 40 - 45 minutes. A knife inserted in the middle should come out clean. Top with the remaining cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh chives. Serves 8.