British Lion Quality

CRACKING
CARE HOME MENUS





Serving British Lion eggs supports resident needs from a nutrition and food safety perspective

Eggs are a valuable food for care home residents, providing high-quality protein, essential vitamins and minerals, and a versatile ingredient that can help support nutrition, appetite and menu choice.

However, with residents among those most vulnerable to foodborne illness, following best practice for egg sourcing and handling is vital. Low-quality imported eggs and egg products are currently flooding the market and represent a major risk to care home residents.



Eggs and egg products that have been produced abroad are regularly linked to major Salmonella outbreaks, residue issues, and traceability issues. Some of these eggs are also produced from battery cage systems that are banned in the UK.

British Lion eggs provide an important safeguard. Produced under an unparalleled, rigorous food safety programme that embraces the entire production chain and includes Salmonella vaccination, independent auditing, full traceability and strict hygiene controls, they are approved by the Food Standards Agency to be consumed raw or runny by vulnerable groups.

"Care home residents are among those most vulnerable to foodborne illness, so egg sourcing is not an area where caterers can afford to take risks, particularly at a time when foreign eggs have been implicated in Salmonella outbreaks. By making sure that only British Lion eggs are used, care homes can be confident, with Food Standards Agency backed assurance, that even if served raw or runny, eggs and egg dishes are safe."

Dr Lisa Ackerley,
Food Safety Expert, CMCIEH FRSPH

"Eggs are such an important and versatile food to use in care home catering and are instantly familiar to all. Malnutrition continues to be one of the main nutritional issues for many care home residents, requiring management (primarily using food) by all care home staff, and in particular care chefs.

"As food-based nutrition support continues to move away from previous advice to simply add calories through additional fat and sugar, focus is rightly shifting to nutrient-dense foods. Eggs are a brilliant nutrient-dense food in their own right and also provide a fantastic nutrient-dense ingredient which can be used to fortify a myriad of other dishes.

"I'm therefore delighted to support this valuable resource which links with the evidence-based guidance produced by the British Dietetic Association and the National Association of Care Catering."

Alison Smith,
Specialist dietitian for older people



RUNNY EGGS ON THE MENU

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) issued advice in 2017 stating that eggs carrying the British Lion mark can be safely eaten runny, or even raw, by vulnerable groups including care home residents.

Previous advice was introduced after the Salmonella crisis of the late 1980s, when vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, babies, and elderly people, were officially advised to avoid raw and lightly cooked (runny) eggs.

However, the British Lion Code of Practice, with its wide-reaching food safety measures, has effectively eliminated Salmonella from British Lion eggs, and this has been recognised by the Food Standards Agency.

Why does this matter?

Eggs are a must-have for any care home menu.

Eggs are a familiar and well accepted food for most older people and can be included at any mealtime and incorporated into a wide range of dishes. In addition, egg dishes tend to be quick and easy to prepare and inexpensive, particularly for the quality of protein provided.

As well as being a good source of high-quality protein, they also contain a number of other vital nutrients which play a significant role in helping to improve and maintain the health and nutritional intake of older people.

There are regular food safety issues related to many eggs produced outside the guaranteed standards of the British Lion Code. As the volume of imported eggs into the UK increases, so does the risk.

While the eggs available from major retailers are produced to British Lion standards, there is still a large proportion of imported eggs that are being sold into foodservice. It is therefore vital for care homes to understand what they're buying.

Key elements of British Lion eggs

Among the suite of measures included in the Lion code are:

- All British Lion hens and eggs are guaranteed British
- Hens are vaccinated against Salmonella
- Complete traceability of hens, eggs and feed
- Increased hygiene controls and Salmonella testing of all flocks
- Regular egg testing, in excess of legal requirements
- Stringent feed controls
- Cool chain starting on the farm
- Eggs stamped on farm with the farm code and production method
- Best-before date and Lion logo printed on the shell as well as on the egg box
- Independently audited to ISO 17065 standard

What should care home caterers do?

- Always specify British Lion eggs in your supply contract
- Don't be tempted to buy local farm eggs - for care home residents this is unsafe
- Only hen eggs can be British Lion eggs – duck eggs could be a source of Salmonella so should be avoided in care homes
- Eggs from abroad will not have the British Lion egg standard and could be unsafe, so should not be used
- Check the eggs carefully when they arrive –
  - Eggs from abroad may have been packed in the UK and would have a UK stamp on the outer carton but do not assume the eggs are UK eggs or British Lion
  - Always check the marks on the actual eggs to see where they have come from
  - If you ordered British Lion eggs, check that is what you've been sent
- The British Lion mark should be on the outer case and the eggs themselves will carry both a Red Lion and a UK mark
- Tell serving staff why you use British Lion eggs and share this with residents and visitors



Egg product standards

If you are cooking with large quantities of eggs, British Lion liquid egg can save time while maintaining food safety standards. British Lion egg products are produced under an independently audited Code of Practice which ensures the highest standards of food safety and quality.

Pasteurisation is not always effective, particularly if the Salmonella load is high and there have been a number of cases of Salmonella contamination in imported liquid eggs. Always use British Lion egg products for an extra layer of protection.

Handling tips

Follow these simple guidelines to ensure you are storing, handling and serving eggs to the highest standards of food safety:

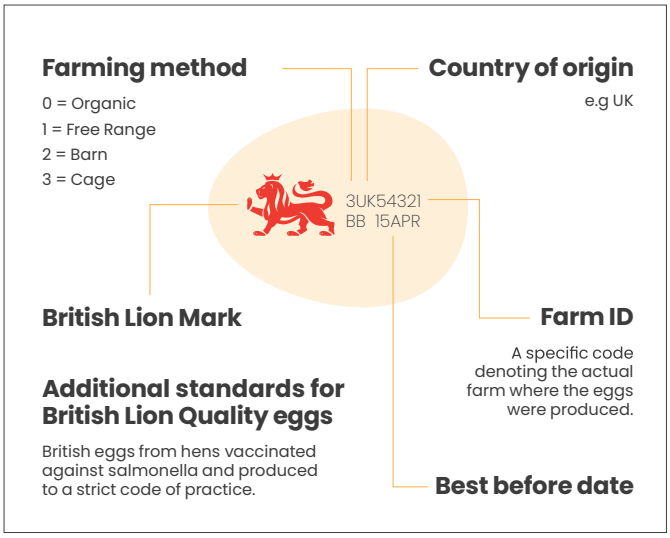
- For the best quality and safety, eggs should be stored at a constant temperature below 20°C
- In a kitchen this means storing eggs in a refrigerator; if this is not possible, store them in the coolest storage area possible while keeping to a regular delivery pattern with a minimum volume of orders
- Store eggs separately from other foods especially raw meat and strong-smelling foods
- Eggs should be allowed to acclimatise to room temperature before cooking for around 30 minutes before use
- Do not use cracked or dirty eggs
- Cooked egg dishes should be consumed as soon as possible after cooking and should be stored in the refrigerator if not for immediate use
- Wash hands before and after handling eggs.

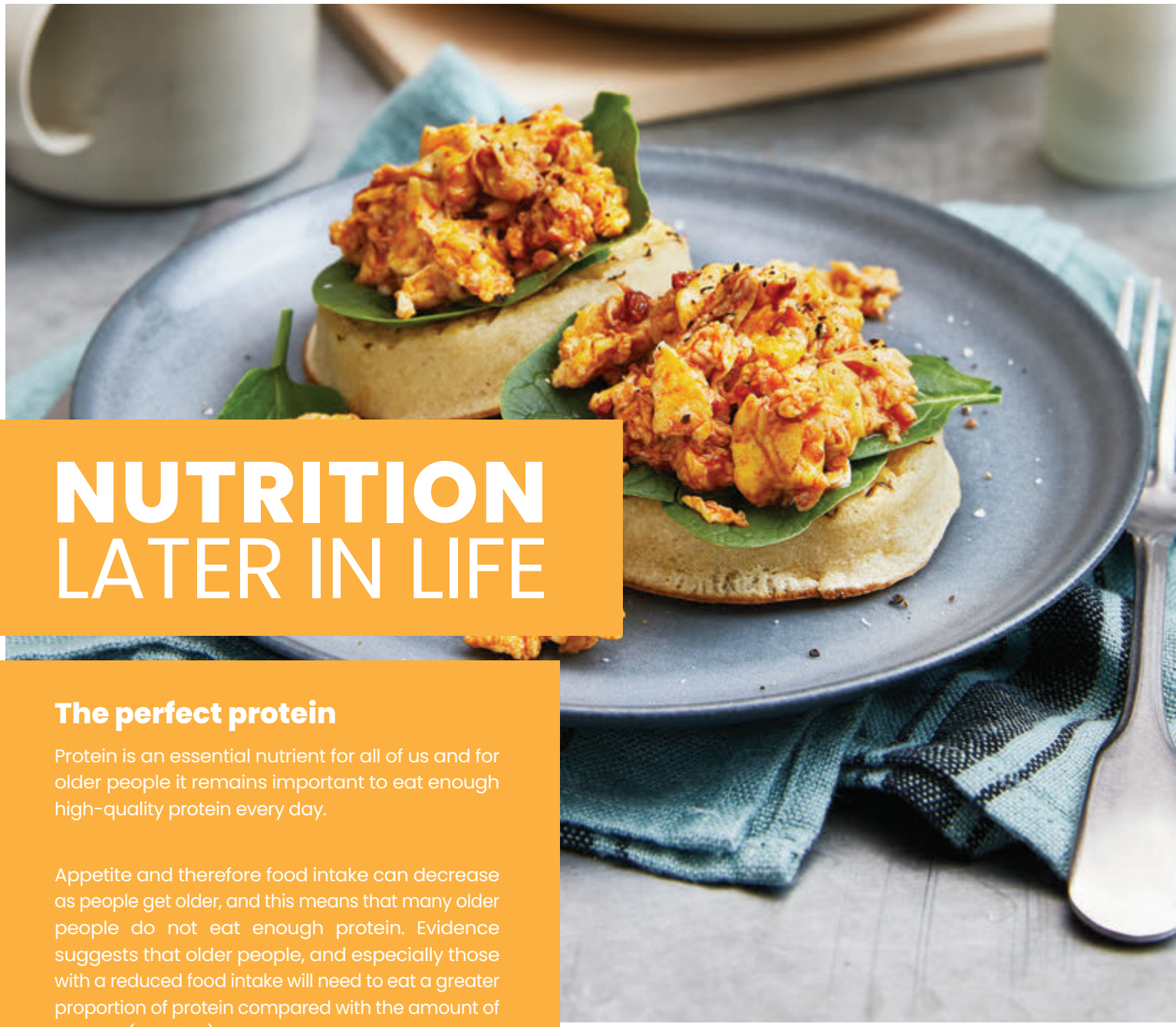


What to look for on eggs

All Class A eggs have to be marked with a code showing the type of farming system, country of origin and production unit.

In addition, British Lion Quality eggs have a best before date on the shell and carry the British Lion logo. British Lion eggs are FSA approved to be eaten runny, or even raw, by vulnerable groups.





NUTRITION LATER IN LIFE

The perfect protein

Protein is an essential nutrient for all of us and for older people it remains important to eat enough high-quality protein every day.

Appetite and therefore food intake can decrease as people get older, and this means that many older people do not eat enough protein. Evidence suggests that older people, and especially those with a reduced food intake will need to eat a greater proportion of protein compared with the amount of energy (calories) that they consume. For more information on this see the Eating, Drinking and Ageing Well resource on the British Dietetic Association (BDA) website.

Low protein intake in older people is associated with both undernutrition and sarcopenia (a reduction in muscle size and strength), both of which can have major effects on health and quality of life. Eggs are a good source of high-quality protein and contain a significant proportion of leucine, an amino acid that is believed to be important for muscle health.

Eggs are also one of the most digestible sources of protein, comparing favourably with milk/cheese and meat/fish. Growing evidence suggests that, in addition to physical activity, eating 25-30g of protein at each meal may help combat loss of muscle size and muscle strength in older people. Research also shows that protein intake amongst older people is often only sufficient at their main meal and is particularly low at breakfast, making it even more important to include eggs on the menu throughout the day.



Nature's multivitamin

As well as containing high-quality protein and omega-3 fatty acids, there are a number of other key nutrients found in eggs that may benefit the health of older people. These include vitamin D, B vitamins, selenium, iodine and choline.

The vitamin D content of eggs is particularly important for older people as it also appears to have a direct effect on muscle strength and low vitamin D levels are associated with an increased likelihood of sarcopenia.

Lifting the limits

One of the most common questions from residents, staff and relatives is whether you should restrict the number of eggs you eat due to their cholesterol content.

The good news is that there are no restrictions on the number of eggs you can eat. All major UK heart and health advisory groups now agree that the dietary cholesterol they contain does not increase the risk of heart disease in most healthy people.

DISHES TO MEET RESIDENT NEEDS



Undernutrition

Older people who have been screened and identified as at risk of undernourishment need more food and drink options which are nutrient dense (dishes and ingredients that contain multiple nutrients including protein, vitamins and minerals as well as calories).

Food fortification or enrichment is frequently recommended by Dietitians for residents who are undernourished. It is important to fortify/enrich food with ingredients which are nutrient dense. Eggs are a great example of both a nutrient dense food and a nutrient dense food fortifier.

Finding out what type of food is needed by and acceptable to each resident is important and because preferences and needs can change, this should be discussed at least every 6 months.

Hints and tips

- Beaten egg can be very useful as a food fortifier, for example added to mashed potato, cheese/parsley sauce, milk puddings, porridge or custard
- Many egg dishes can themselves be fortified, and again ingredients which are nutrient dense should be used, (for example skimmed milk powder, nut butter or ground almonds, cheese, Greek yoghurt, pea protein powder or soya protein powder)
- When making scrambled eggs, try adding fortified milk (add 4 tablespoons dried, skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full fat milk and mix) and/or grated cheese
- Try adding ground almonds to a frittata mix or adding cheese to an omelette filling
- For more information see the Care Home Digest on the BDA's website

Dementia

The familiarity of eggs, particularly as part of breakfast and snack meals, can be really helpful when providing meals for people living with dementia who may be more able to recognise dishes which have associations with their past.

Eggs, either on their own or as part of another dish, can also be useful as finger foods for people who struggle to use cutlery or who find it difficult to sit down for long enough to eat a meal.

- Traditional ways of serving eggs (boiled, poached, fried, scrambled or as an omelette) can be good choices, especially at breakfast or as a snack meal
- Of course, some people with dementia are very happy to try new foods and people's dietary preferences can change, so try less familiar dishes like smoked salmon frittata or roast pepper with baked eggs too
- Brightly coloured dishes or those which contrast with the colour of the plate they are served on can also be more obvious for people with dementia, so can encourage appetite
- Ideas for finger foods featuring eggs include hard-boiled eggs, stuffed eggs, homemade scotch eggs, Spanish omelette cut into cubes, mini omelette wraps, egg mayonnaise on crackers or bread, and mini quiches



Dysphagia

Up to 68% of older people resident in care homes can experience eating, drinking and swallowing problems (sometimes called dysphagia). For people with diagnosed or suspected dysphagia, providing modified texture foods (such as soft and bite size, minced and moist or puréed) may be recommended and chosen by the person with dysphagia.

Soft textured foods may also be preferred by some older people who have dentures, or whose teeth are in poor condition.

- Suitable foods can include soft omelette, smooth quiche filling, scrambled egg, sweet or savoury baked egg custard (can be made with fortified milk), soft baked egg, smooth no-bake cheesecake filling, traditionally made tiramisu (well soaked sponge fingers)
- Soft and bite sized food should be served in pieces no larger than 1.5cm
- Soft dishes like these could also be puréed

MEET
THE EXPERTS



Dr Lisa Ackerley
Food Safety Expert, CMCIEH FRSPH

Dr Lisa Ackerley is a leading authority in food safety and public health and hygiene, with over 40 years of experience across regulatory, academic, industry, and media sectors. A Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner and Professorial Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health, Lisa has shaped food safety policy, practice, and communication in the UK and internationally.

Lisa has held strategic advisory and board roles with UKHospitality, SALSA and the Department of Health, contributing to national guidance on catering hygiene, allergens, acrylamide, and COVID-19 hygiene protocols. She served on the FSA Steering Group reviewing the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and was a member of several other FSA working groups. She is the Chair of the Board of Reckitt Global Hygiene Institute and Trustee, Trustee of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Scientific Advisor of the International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene.

Currently Director of the Public Health Company Ltd, Lisa continues to influence food safety standards, policy development, and public engagement, championing evidence-based hygiene practices to reduce foodborne illness and antimicrobial resistance. She also works as an expert witness on food and environmental hygiene issues.



Alison Smith
Specialist Dietitian For Older People

Alison Smith is a Prescribing Support Consultant Dietitian in the NHS, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances, and committee member of the British Dietetic Association Older People Specialist Group and Optimising Nutrition Prescribing Specialist Group.



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