



Have You Heard?

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Solving The Mystery Of Good Nutrition

Knowing what to eat, and how much, remains a mystery to many Americans.

Despite nearly a decade of public education, we are still consuming too much fat and not enough fiber and complex carbohydrates. This nutritional imbalance is a major cause of America's high rate of obesity and diseases ranging from heart disease to certain forms of cancer.

Despite the confusion, the

nutrition mystery does not have to go unsolved. In 1990, the government revised its "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" to help us achieve a better balanced diet. The recommendations boil down countless nutritional research reports into one set of easy-to-follow guidelines. Basically, based on these guidelines, we need more fruits, vegetables and grain products to help us increase fiber and complex carbohydrates and cut back on fats.

These 1990 guidelines do away

with the "Basic Four" food groups that most people grew up with, by splitting fruits and vegetables into two separate groups. The daily guidelines is three to five servings of vegetables, and two to four servings of fruits. The serving size is one-half cup (a full cup for raw leafy greens) or one medium apple, orange or banana.

The guidelines also recommended two or three daily product servings (an 8-ounce glass of milk is one serving) and two three-ounce protein servings each day.

Most significantly, the guidelines suggest we eat six to eleven servings of grain products such as breads, cereals, rice and pasta daily. This formalized a recommendation that many health authorities had been suggesting for nearly a decade.

A recent Gallop Poll shows that pasta, pizza and breads make America's "top ten" list of favorite foods. Even though Americans enjoy the taste and variety of grain-based foods, researchers say that we are only eating about four

servings of grain products daily.

What seems to be the problem?

Many people seem to think six to eleven servings sounds like too much food when its a very achievable guideline.

Typical serving sizes include: One slice of bread; one-half bun, bagel or English muffin; one ounce of dry cereal or one-half cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta.

Here is a simple way to meet the "6 to 11" goal. An English muffin and a small bowl of cereal for breakfast would be three serv-

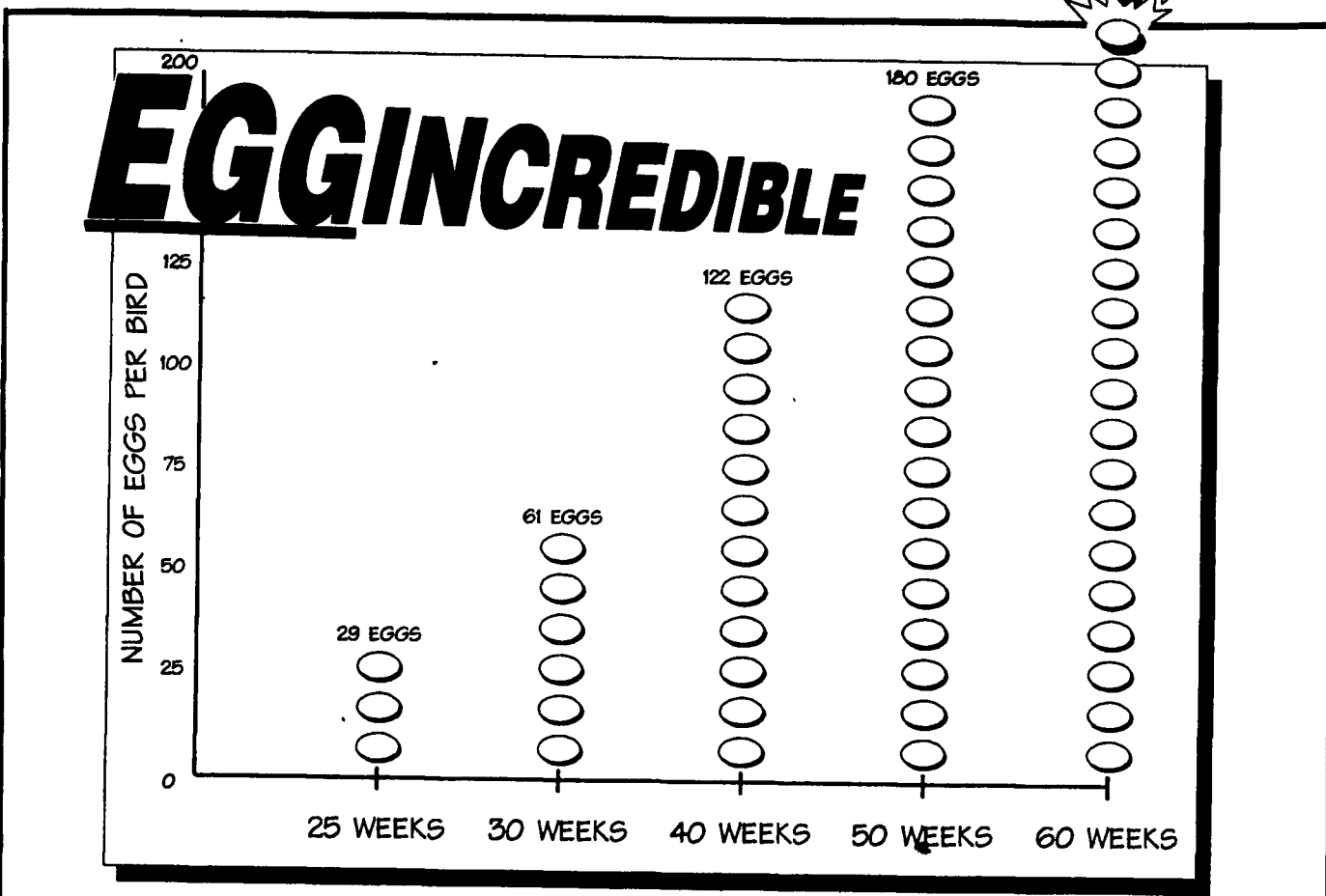
ings. A sandwich or hamburger at lunch would make two more. A one-cup serving of pasta at dinner, along with a dinner roll, adds up to three more. Presto, eight servings.

You can vary the menu with toast, hot cereals, bagels, muffins, wheat flour tortillas and similar grain-based foods, but go easy on the butter or spreads.

Best of all, eating more vegetables, fruit and grain products adds relatively few calories to your diet and can help you reduce total fat consumption.

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